fangirl

Based on the
bestselling novel by
RAINBOW
ROWELL

2

Adapted by
SAM MAGGS
and
RAINBOW
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Illustrated by
GABI NAM

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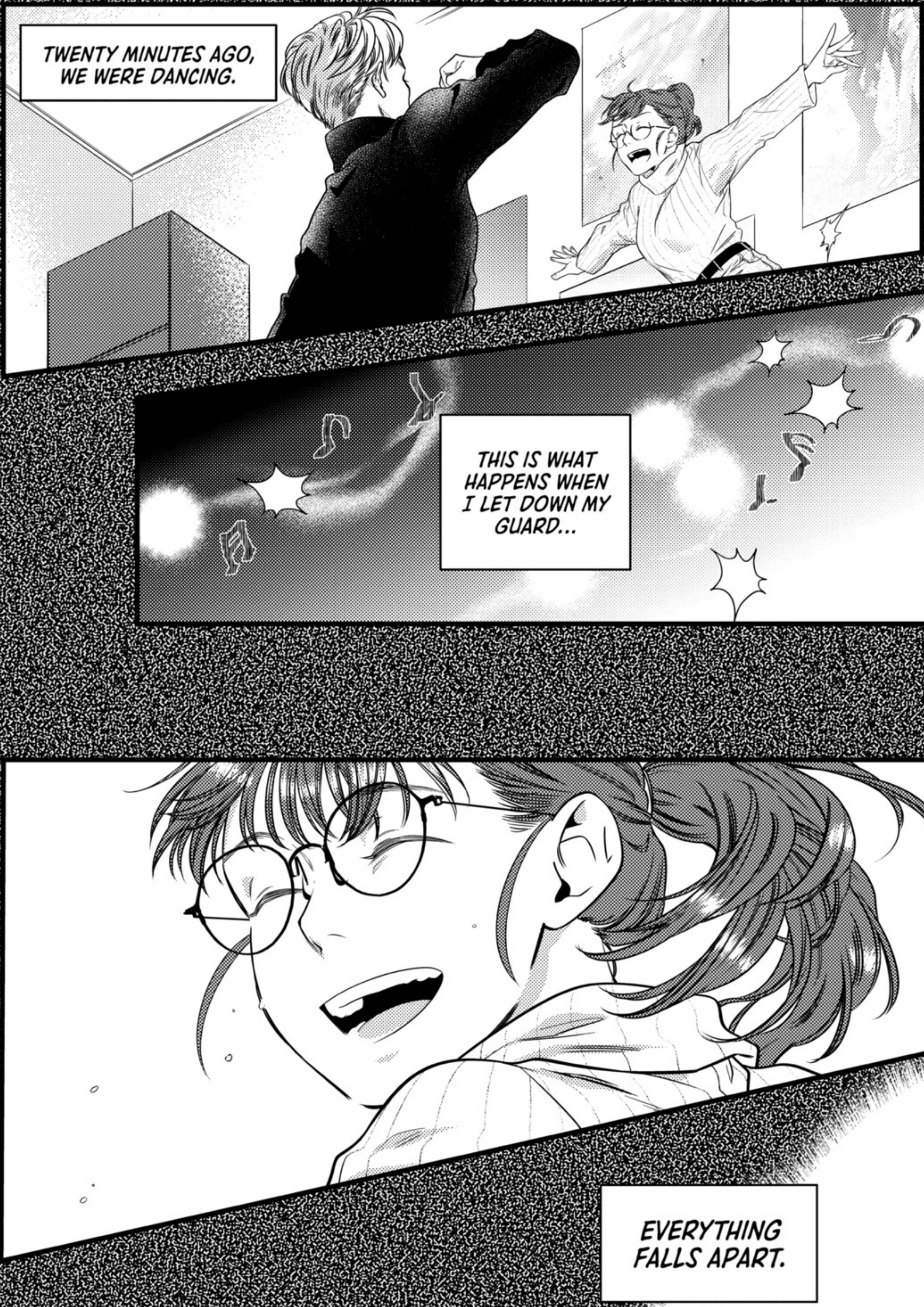
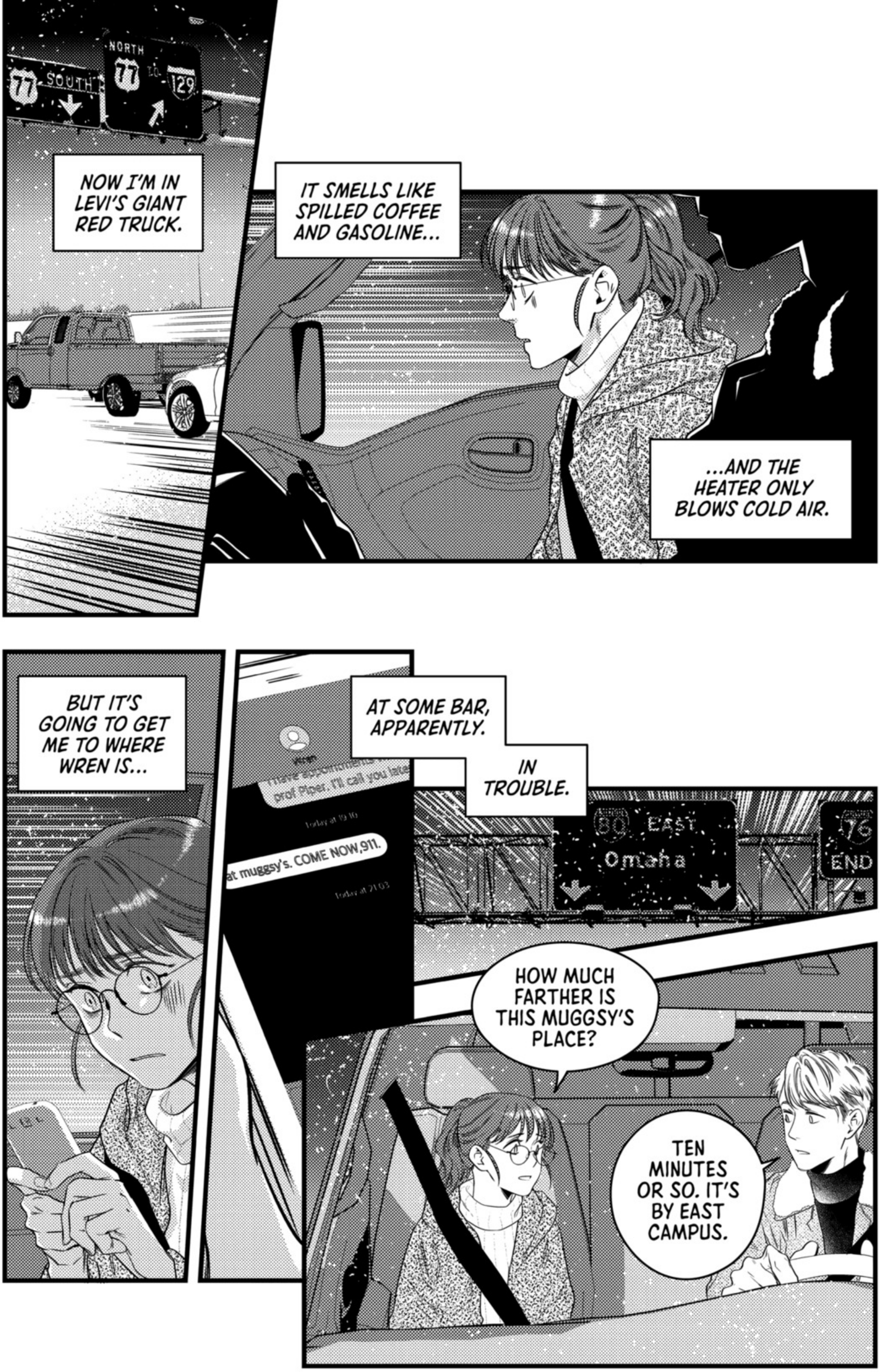
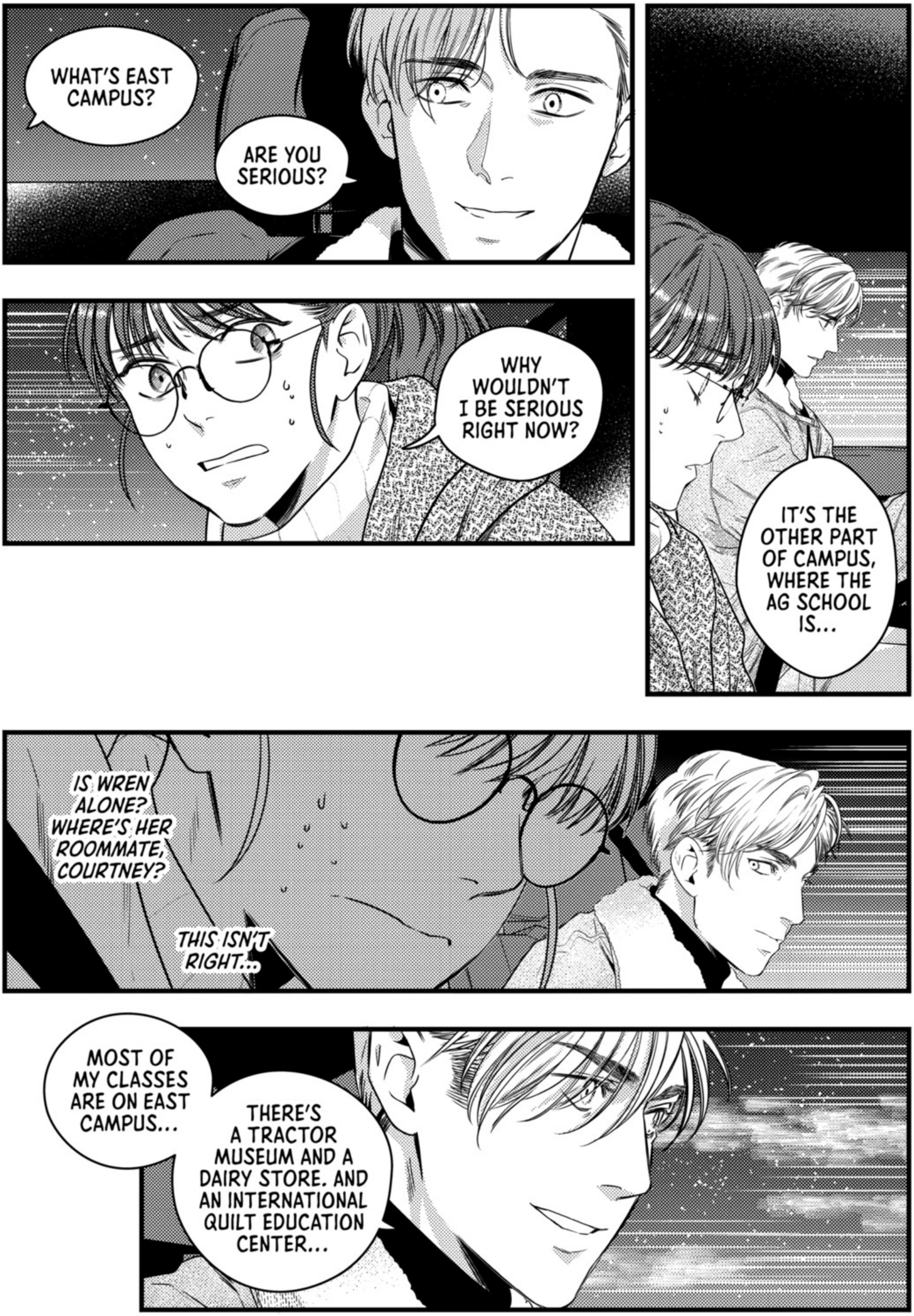
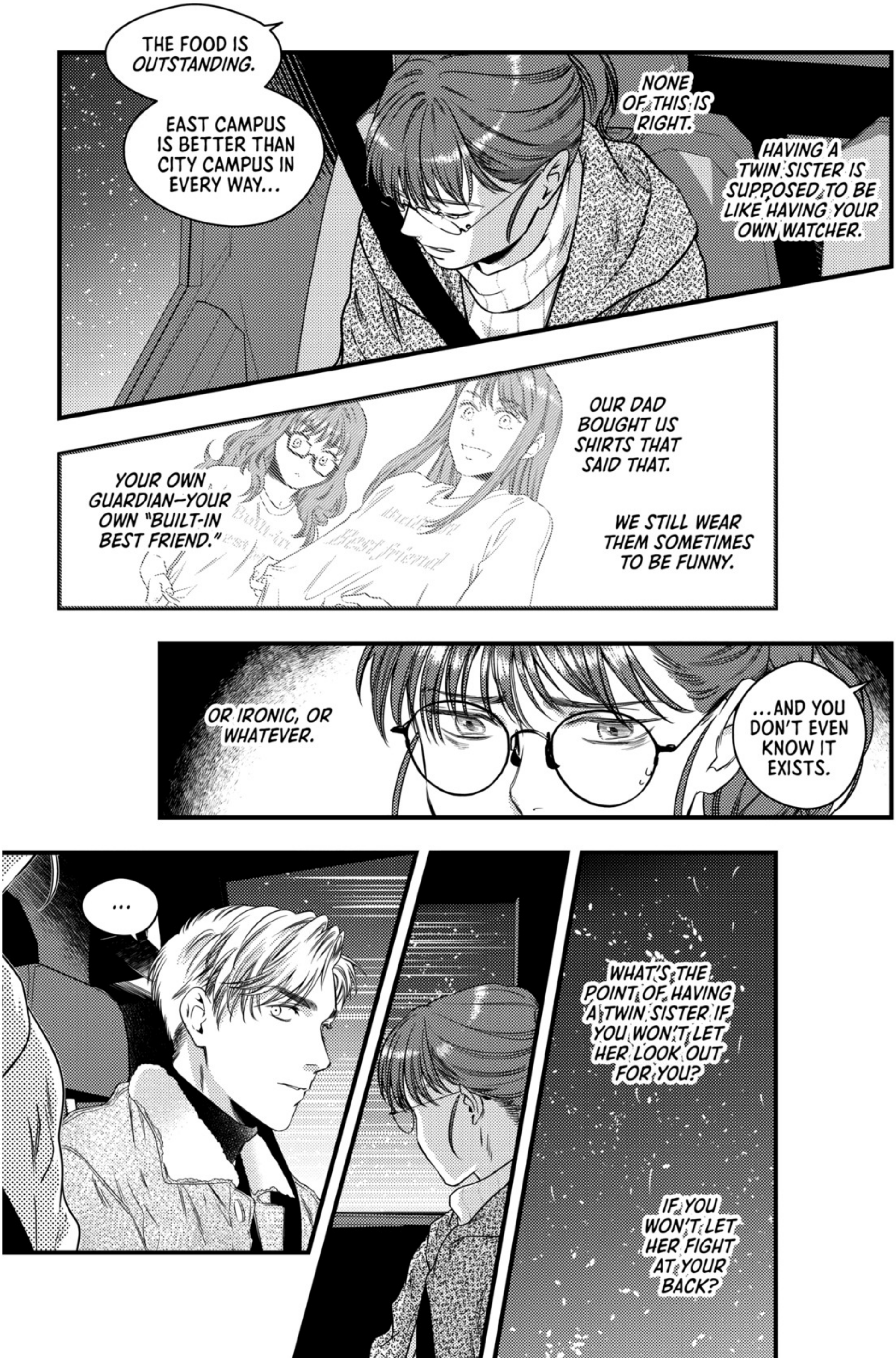
VIZ ORIGINALS

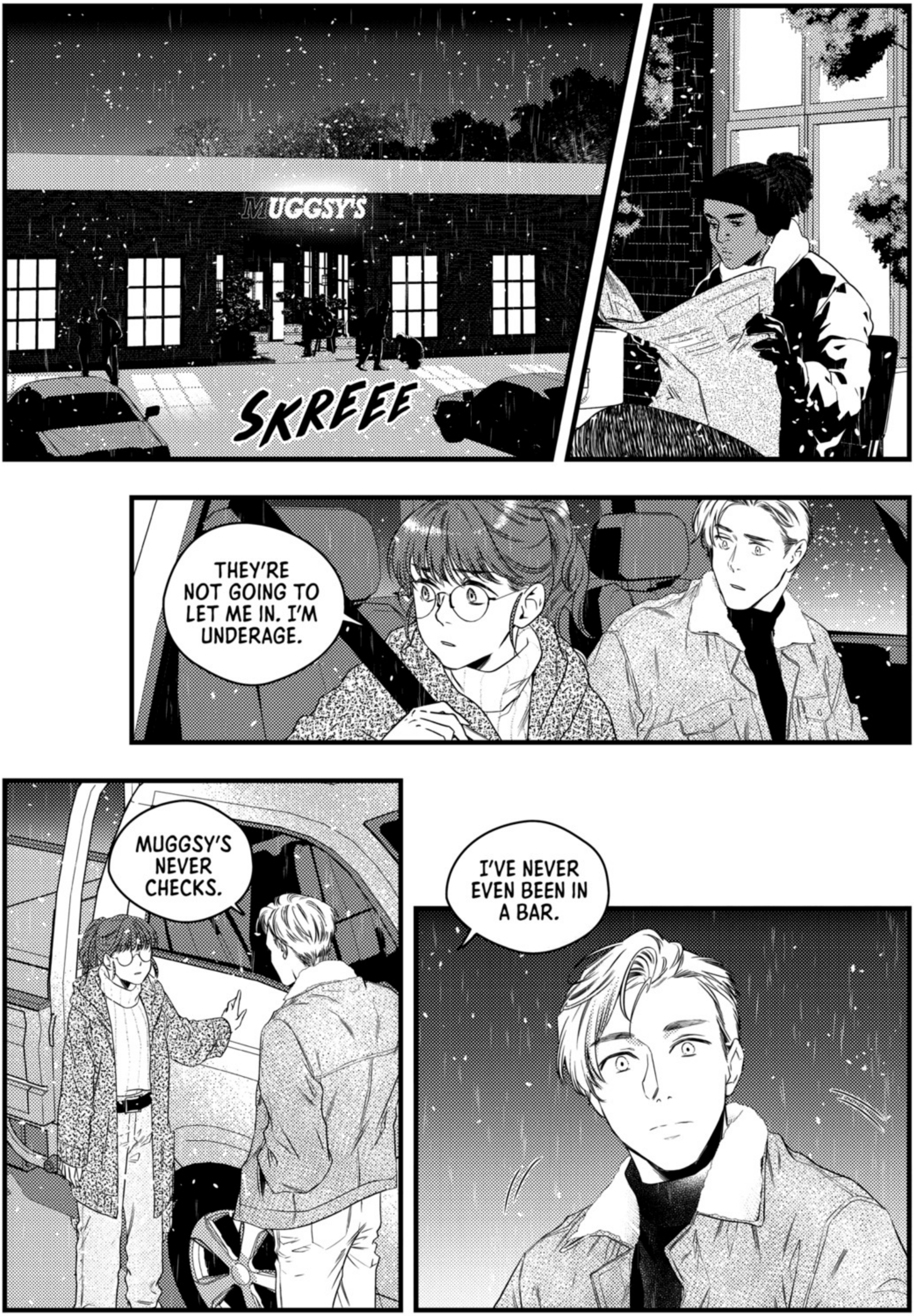
fangirl

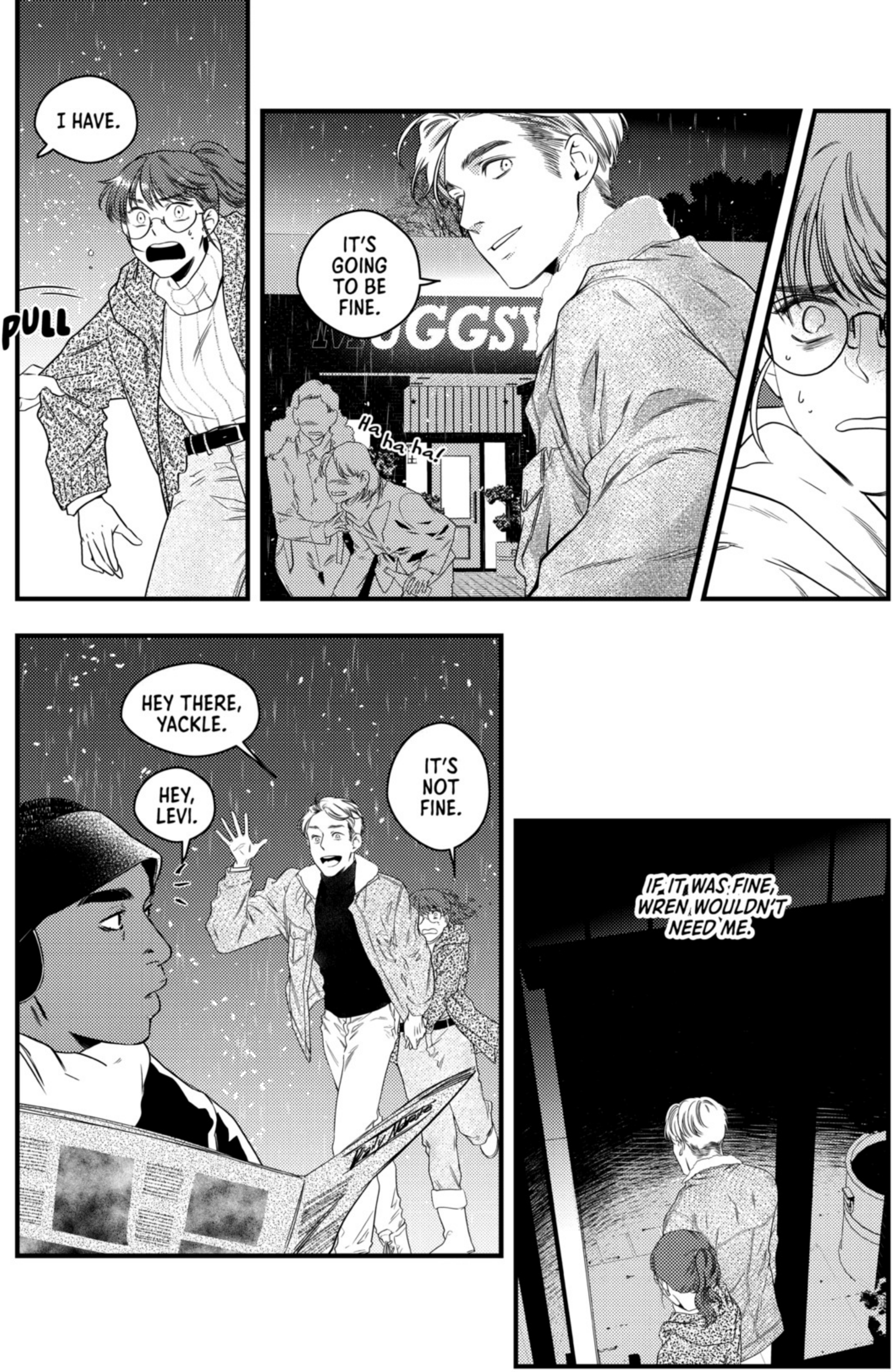

TWENTY MINUTES AGO, WE WERE DANCING.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I LET DOWN MY GUARD...
EVERYTHING FALLS APART.

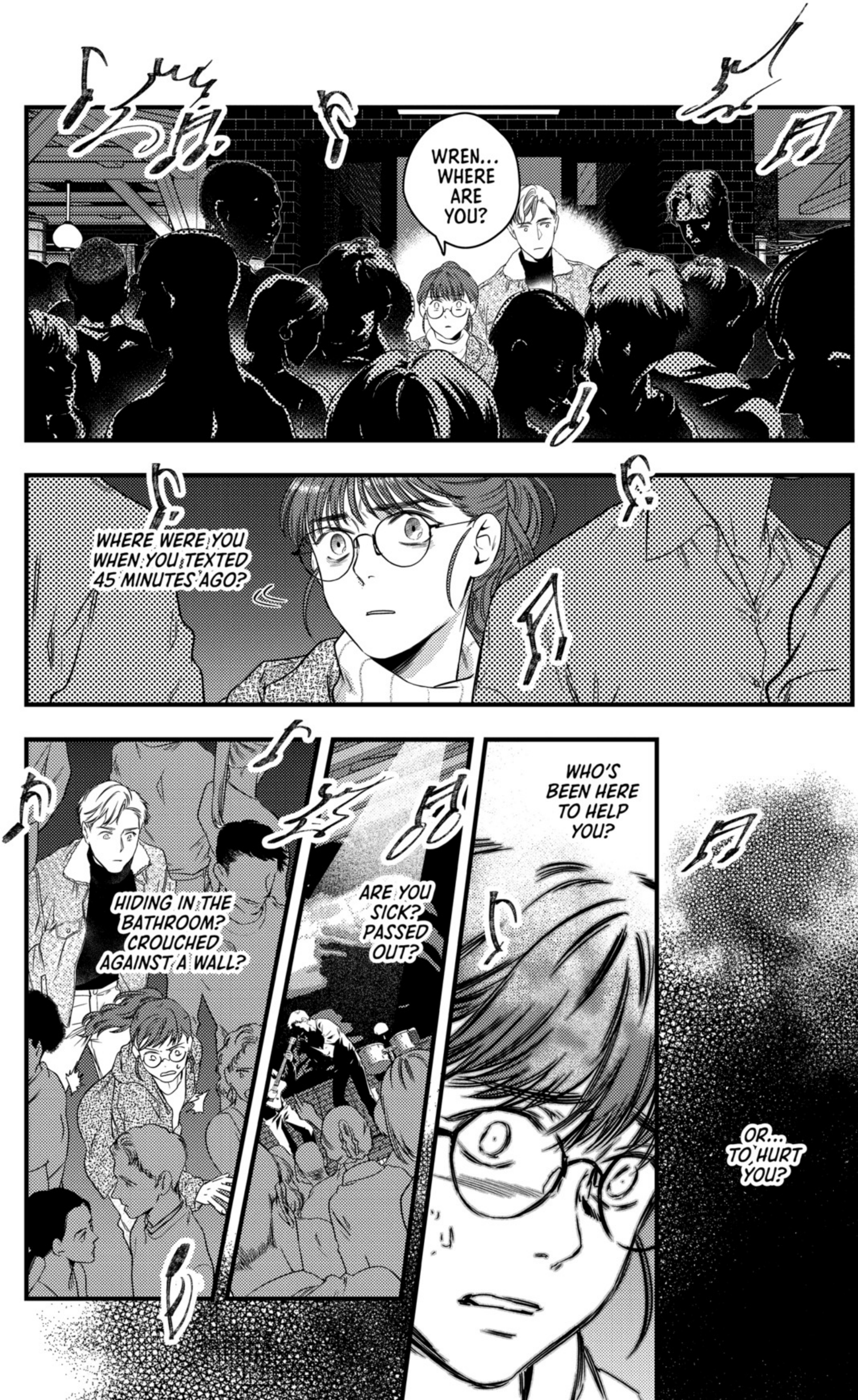

77 SOUTH
NORTH 77 TO 129
NOW I'M IN LEVI'S GIANT RED TRUCK.
IT SMELLS LIKE SPILLED COFFEE AND GASOLINE...
...AND THE HEATER ONLY BLOWS COLD AIR.
BUT IT'S GOING TO GET ME TO WHERE WREN IS...
Wren
I have appointments
prof Piper. I'll call you late
Today at 19:16
at muggsy's. COME NOW,911.
Today at 21:03
AT SOME BAR, APPARENTLY.
IN TROUBLE.
80 EAST Omaha
176 END
HOW MUCH FARTHER IS THIS MUGGSY'S PLACE?
TEN MINUTES OR SO. IT'S BY EAST CAMPUS.

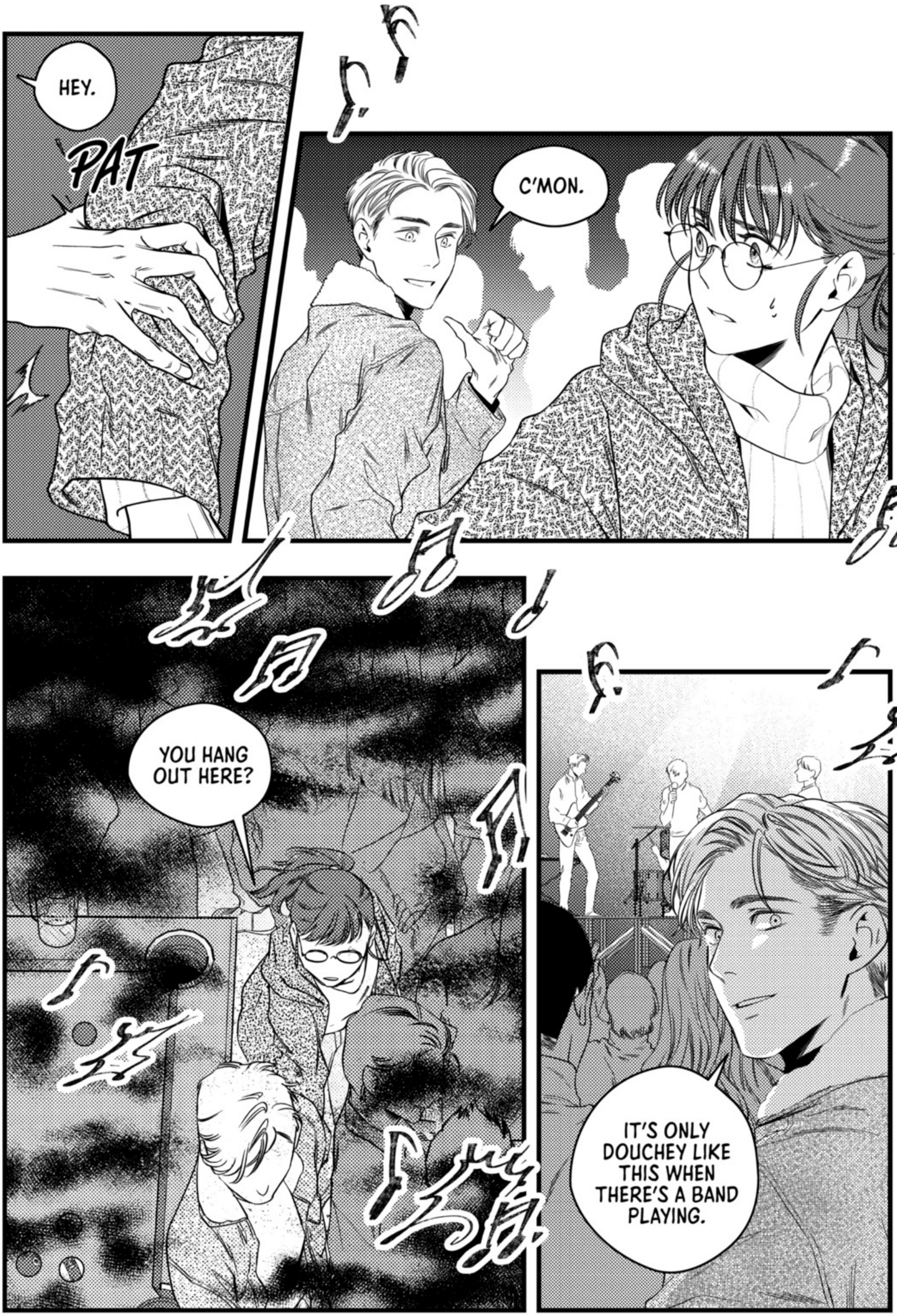

WHAT'S EAST CAMPUS?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
WHY WOULDN'T I BE SERIOUS RIGHT NOW?
IT'S THE OTHER PART OF CAMPUS, WHERE THE AG SCHOOL IS...
IS WREN ALONE? WHERE'S HER ROOMMATE, COURTNEY?
THIS ISN'T RIGHT...
MOST OF MY CLASSES ARE ON EAST CAMPUS...
THERE'S A TRACTOR MUSEUM AND A DAIRY STORE. AND AN INTERNATIONAL QUILT EDUCATION CENTER...

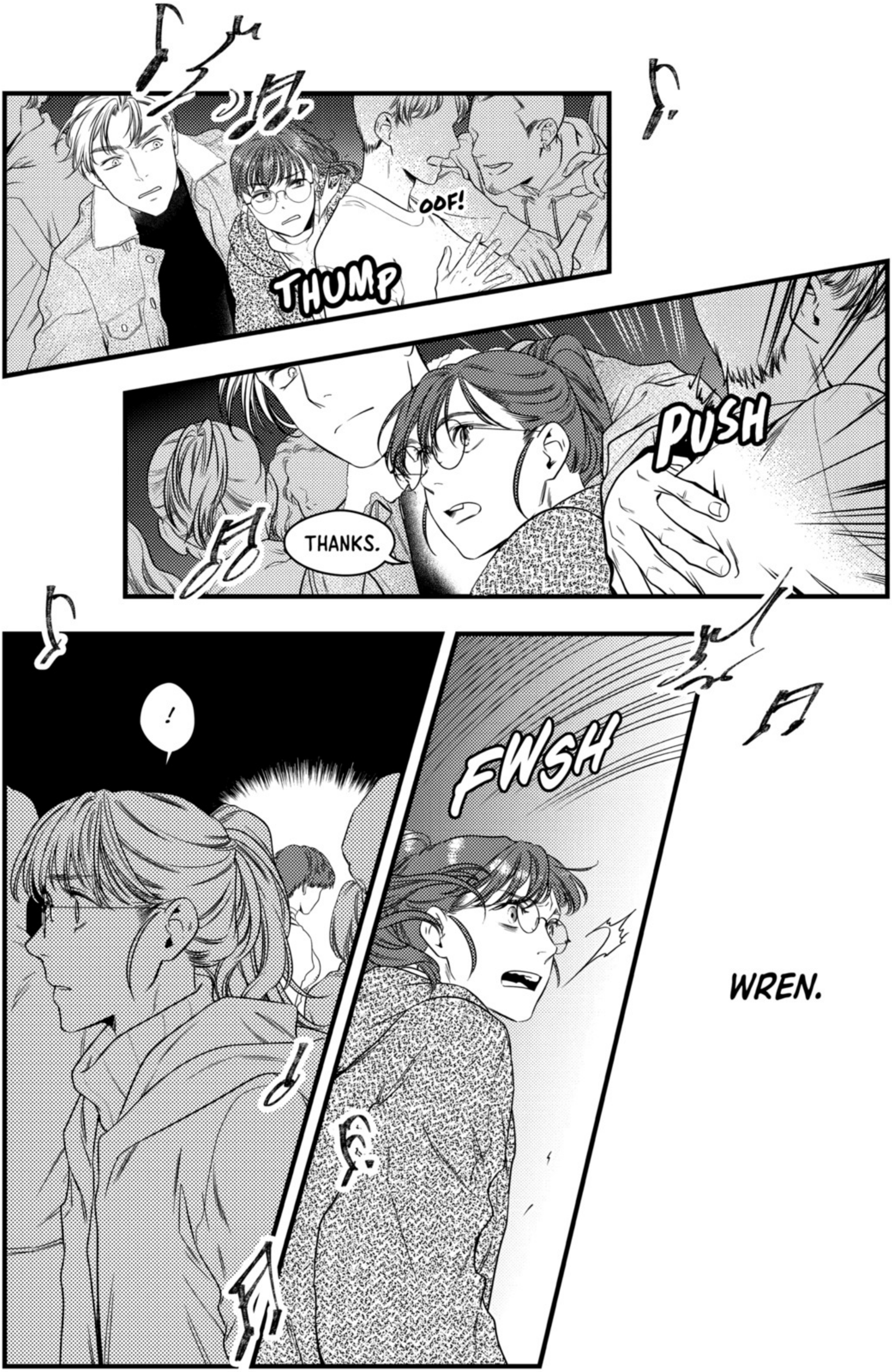

THE FOOD IS *OUTSTANDING.*
EAST CAMPUS IS BETTER THAN CITY CAMPUS IN EVERY WAY...
NONE OF THIS IS RIGHT.
HAVING A TWIN SISTER IS SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE HAVING YOUR OWN WATCHER.
YOUR OWN GUARDIAN—YOUR OWN "BUILT-IN BEST FRIEND."
OUR DAD BOUGHT US SHIRTS THAT SAID THAT.
WE STILL WEAR THEM SOMETIMES TO BE FUNNY.
OR IRONIC, OR WHATEVER.
...AND YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IT EXISTS.
...
WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING A TWIN SISTER IF YOU WON'T LET HER LOOK OUT FOR YOU?
IF YOU WON'T LET HER FIGHT AT YOUR BACK?

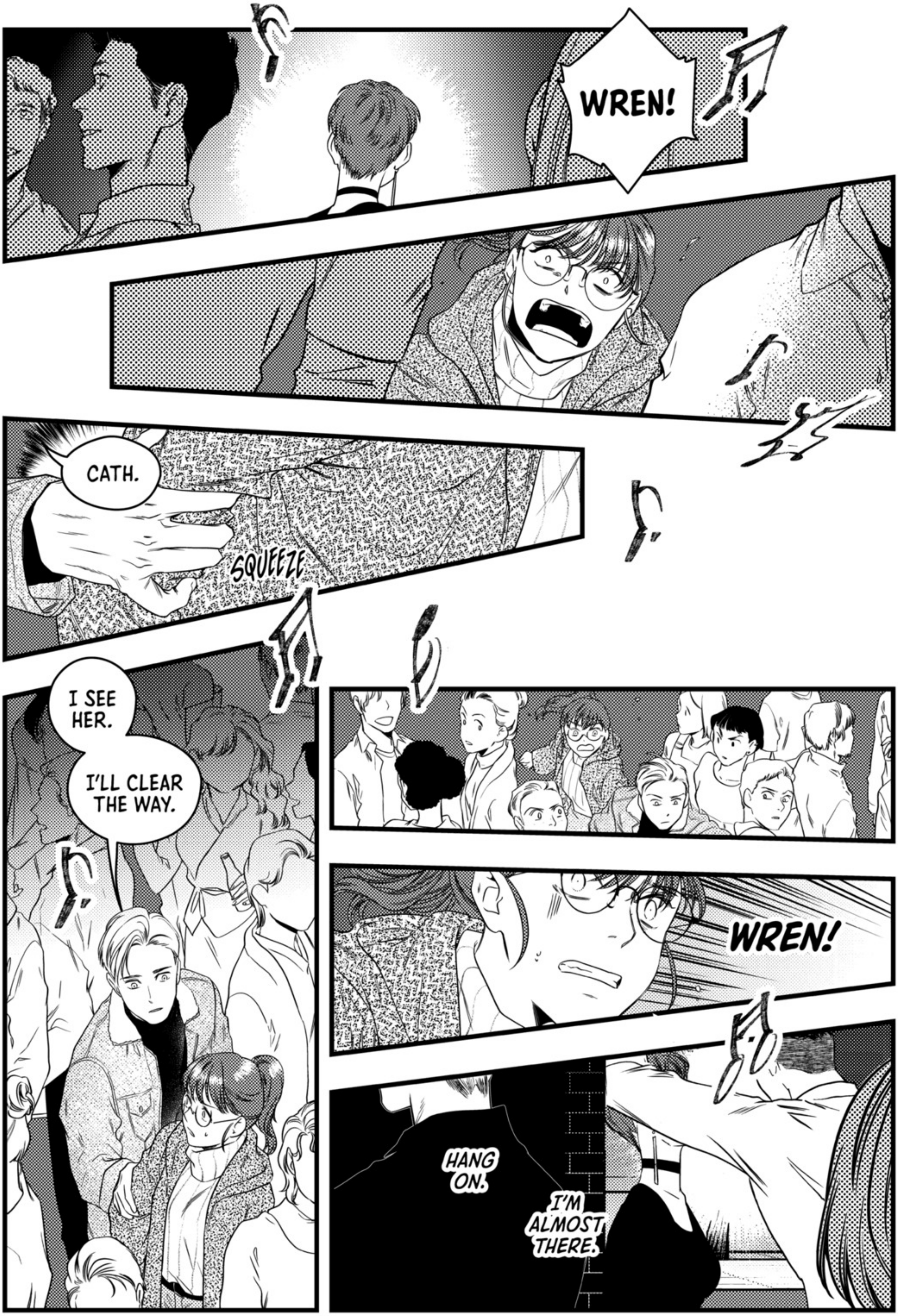

MUGGSY'S
SKREEE
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET ME IN. I'M UNDERAGE.
MUGGSY'S NEVER CHECKS.
I'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN IN A BAR.

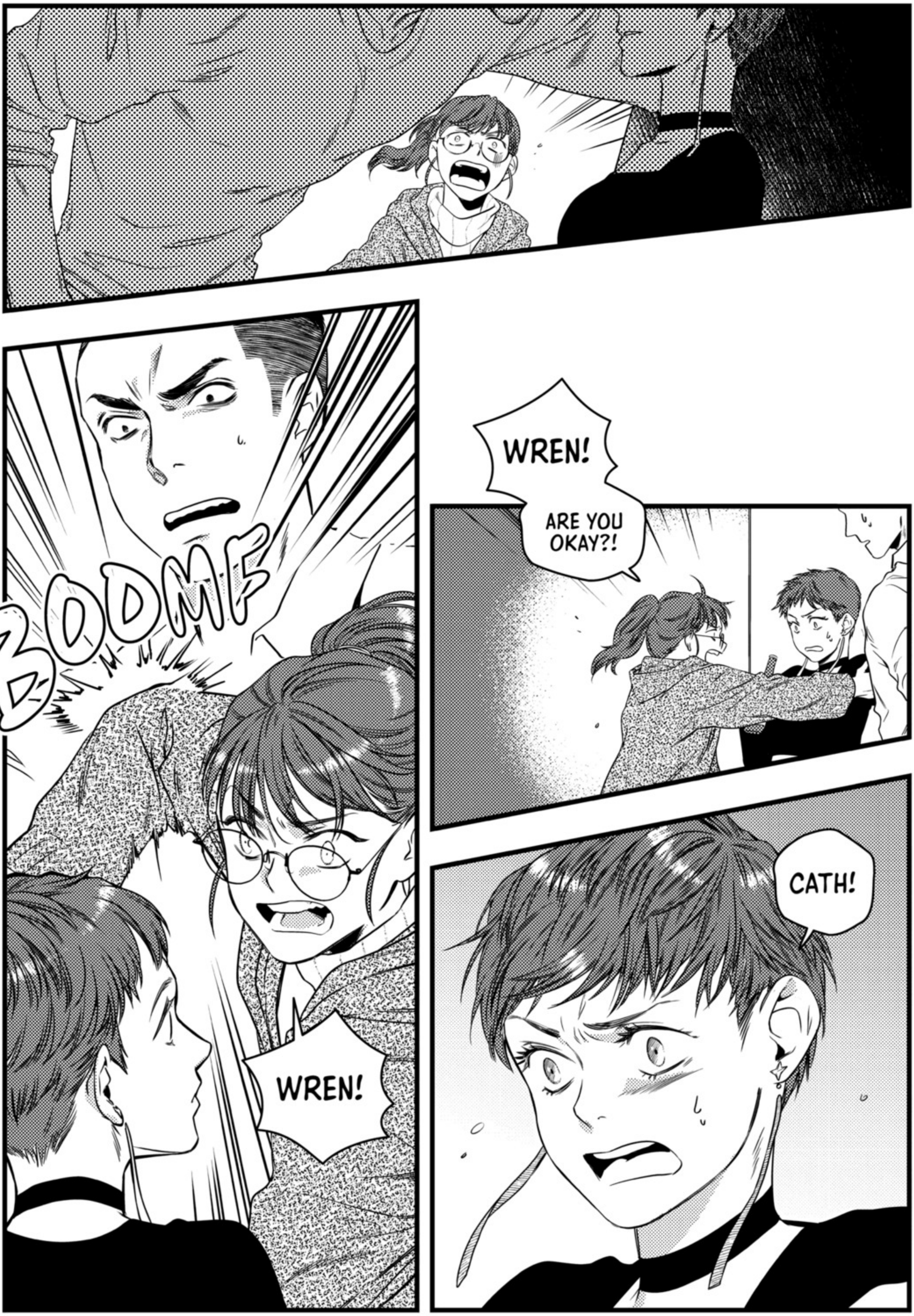

I HAVE.
PULL
IT'S GOING TO BE FINE.
Ha ha ha!
HEY THERE, YACKLE.
HEY, LEVI.
IT'S NOT FINE.
IF IT WAS FINE, WREN WOULDN'T NEED ME.

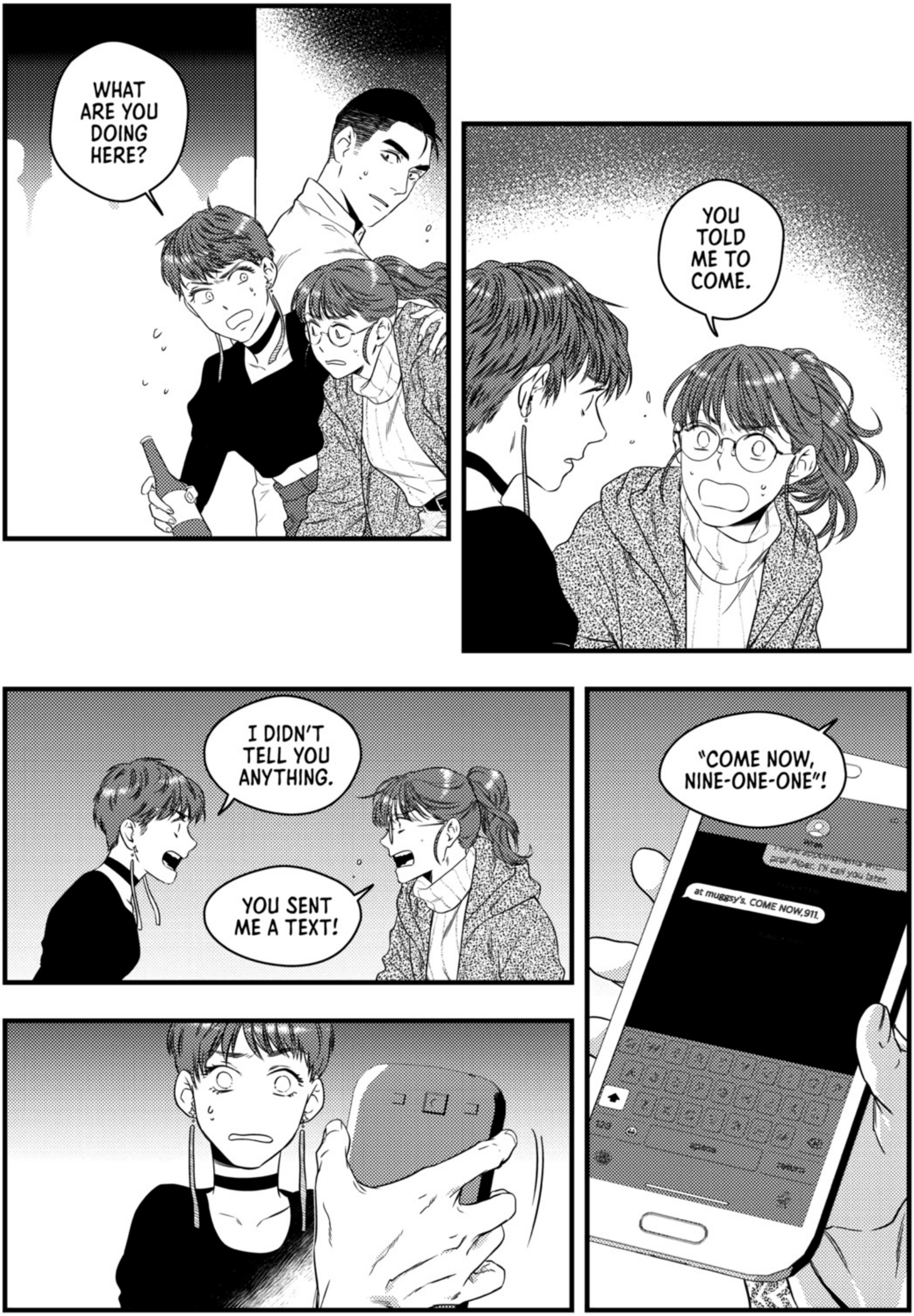

WREN... WHERE ARE YOU?
WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU TEXTED 45 MINUTES AGO?
HIDING IN THE BATHROOM? CROUCHED AGAINST A WALL?
ARE YOU SICK? PASSED OUT?
WHO'S BEEN HERE TO HELP YOU?
OR... TO HURT YOU?

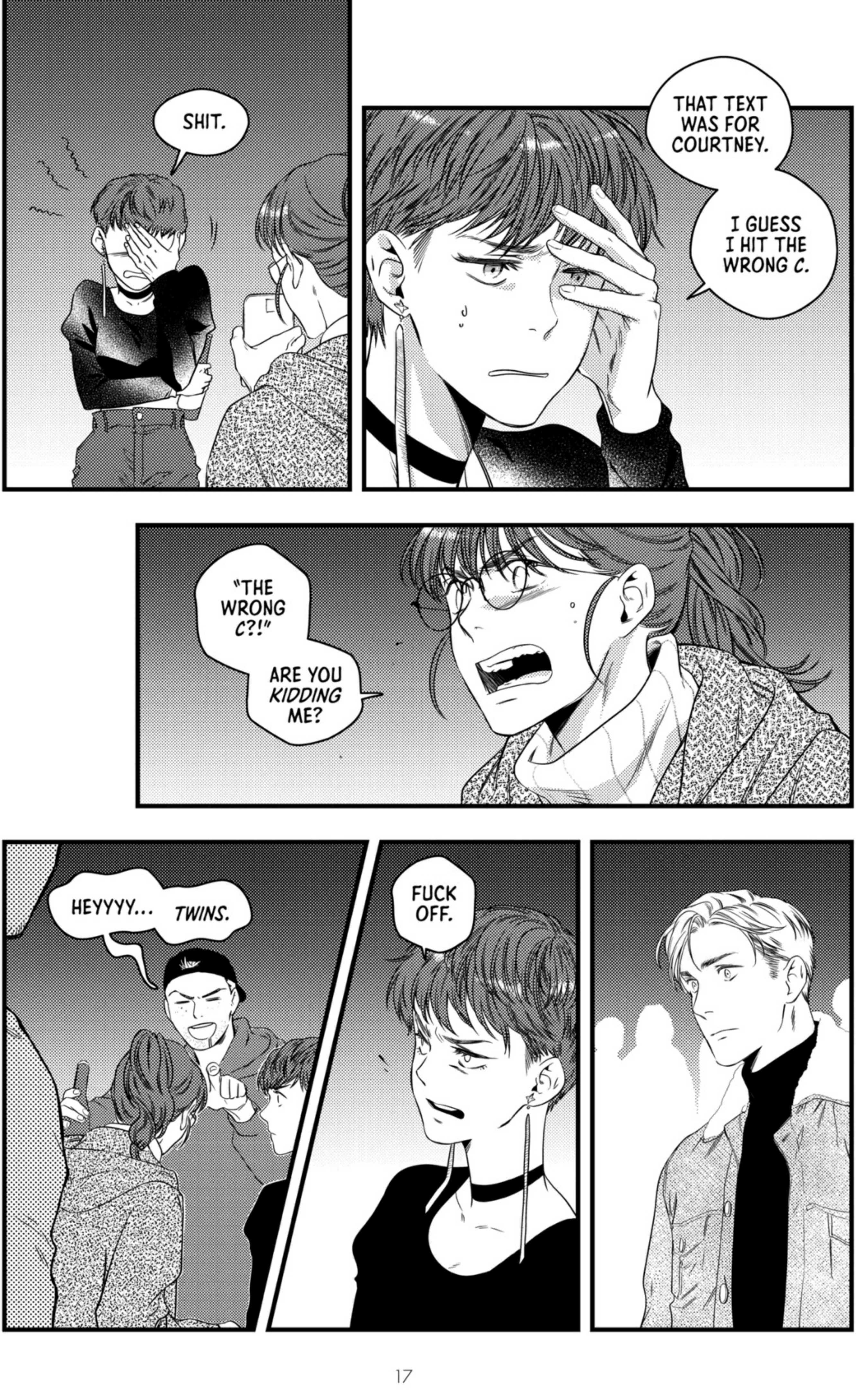

HEY.
PAT
C'MON.
YOU HANG OUT HERE?
IT'S ONLY DOUCHEY LIKE THIS WHEN THERE'S A BAND PLAYING.

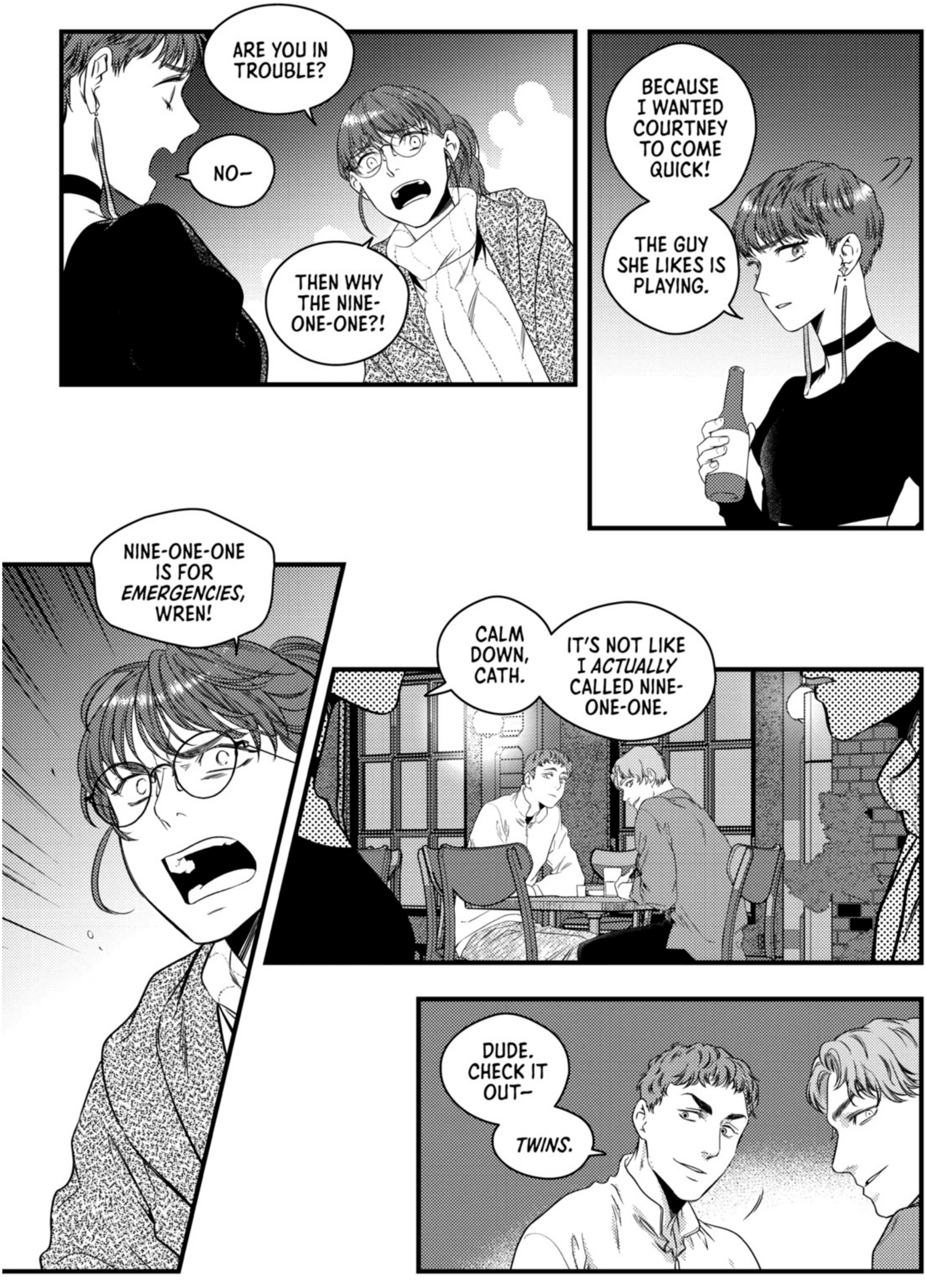

OOF!
THUMP
PUSH
THANKS.
!
FWSH
WREN.

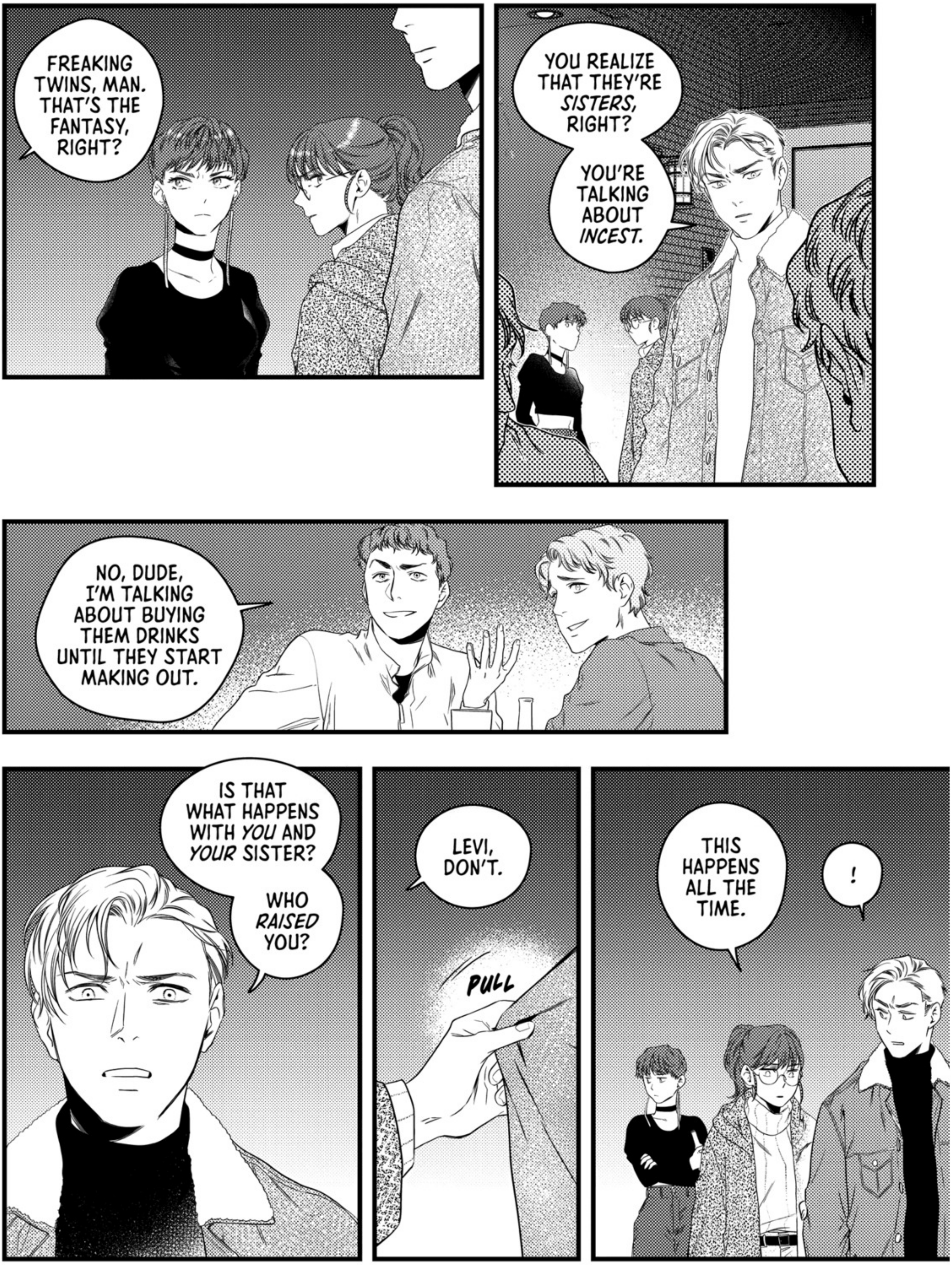

WREN!
CATH.
SQUEEZE
I SEE HER.
I'LL CLEAR THE WAY.
WREN!
HANG ON.
I'M ALMOST THERE.

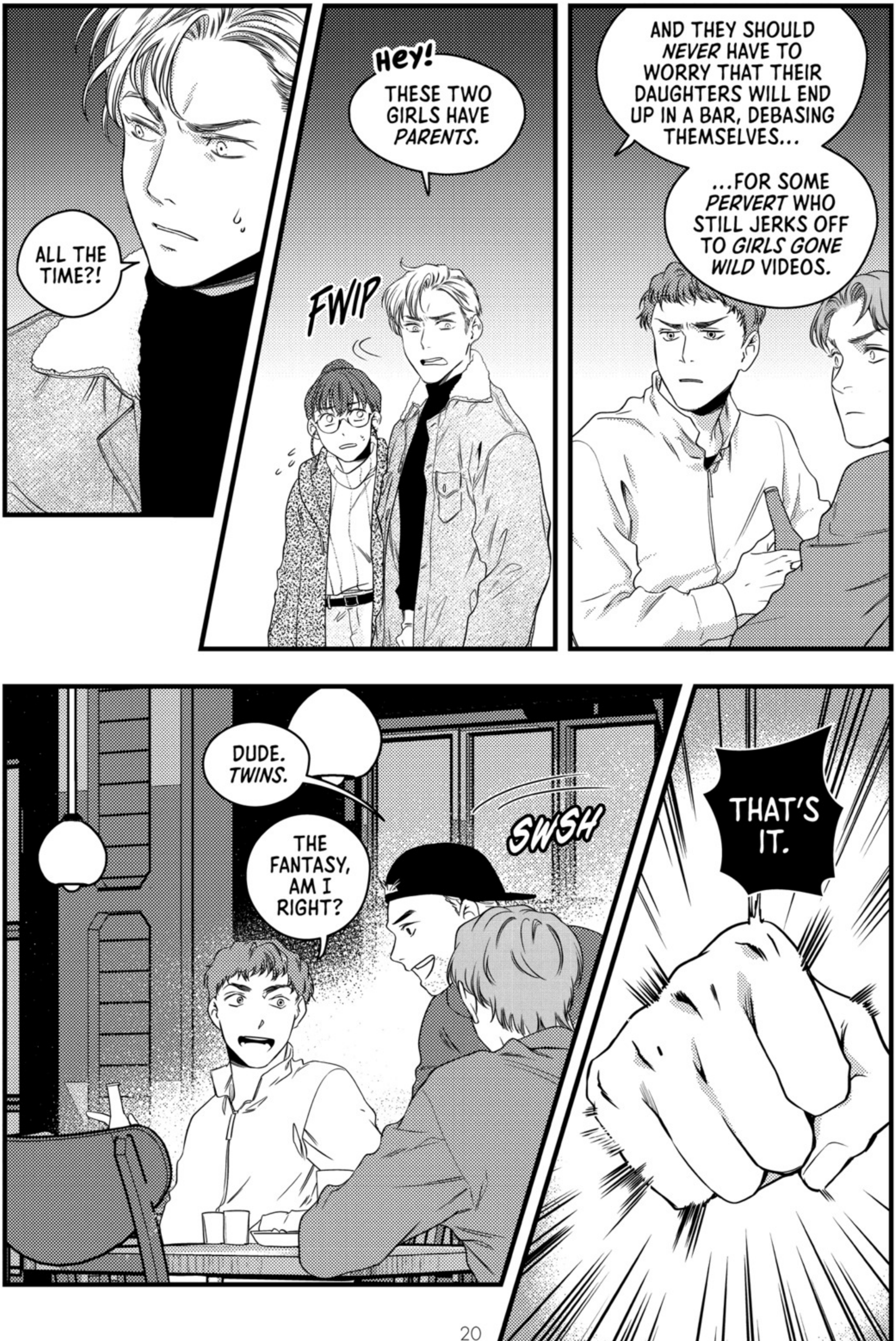

BOOMF
WREN!
WREN!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
CATH!

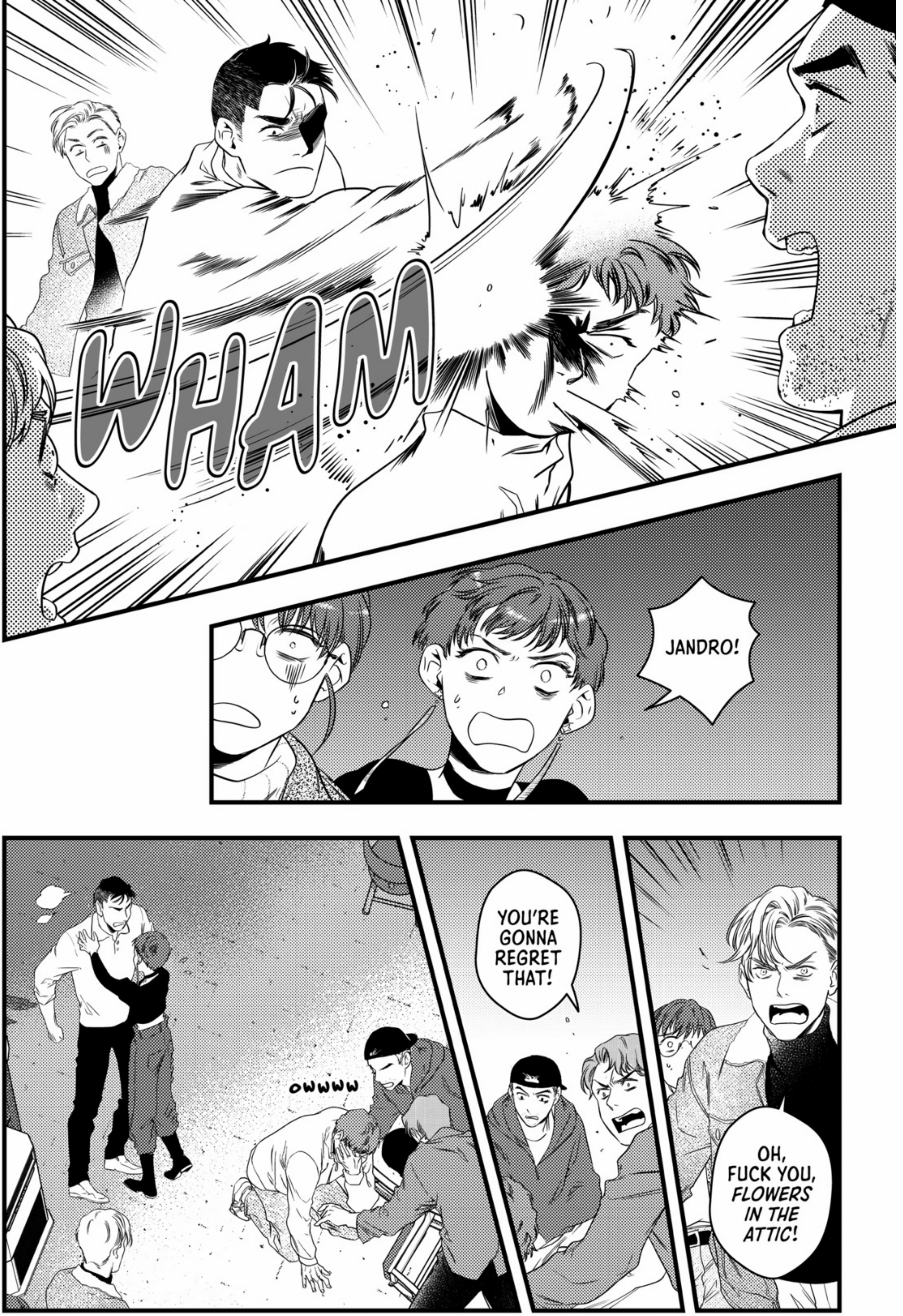

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU TOLD ME TO COME.
I DIDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING.
YOU SENT ME A TEXT!
"COME NOW, NINE-ONE-ONE"!
at muggsy's. COME NOW,911.

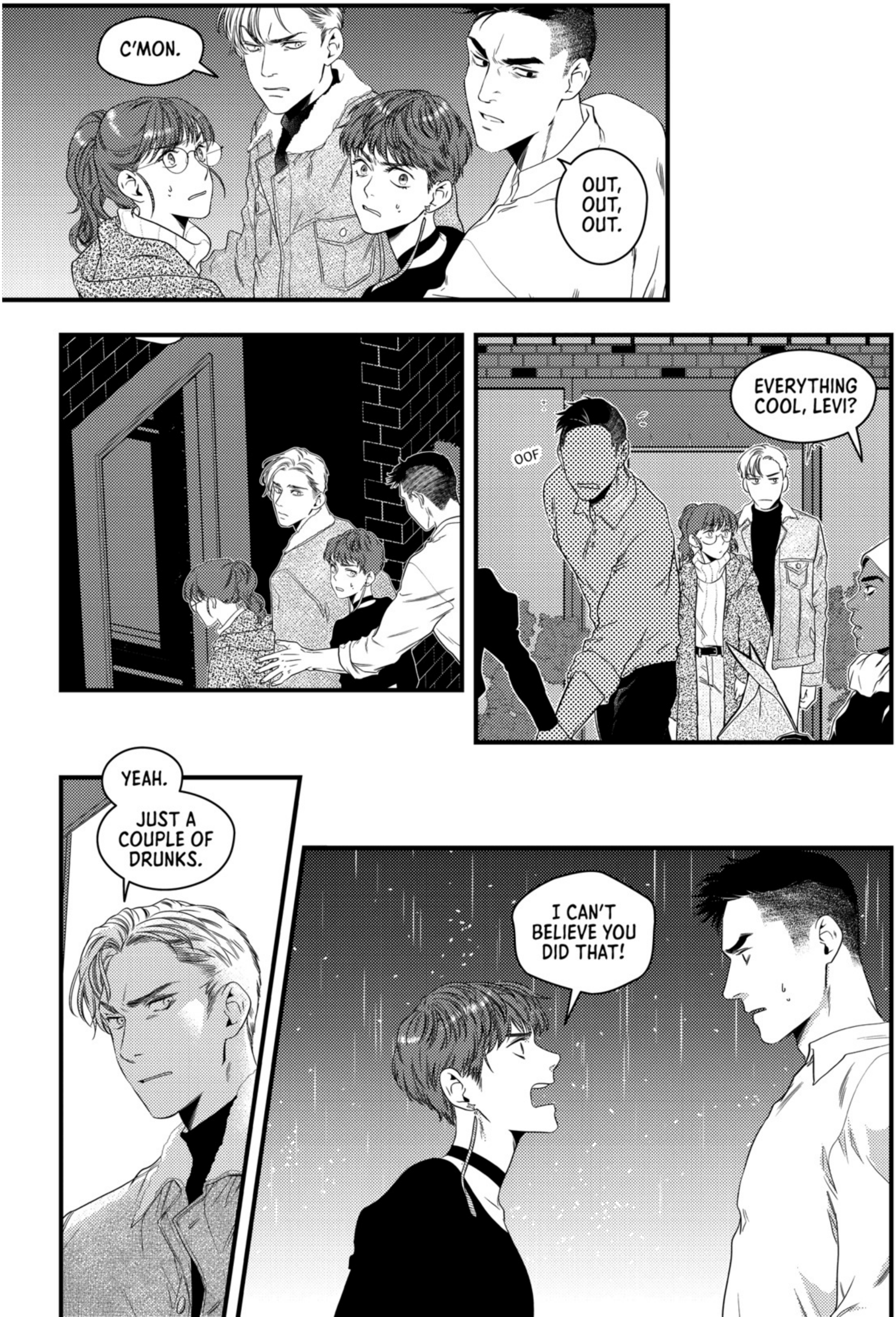

SHIT.
THAT TEXT WAS FOR COURTNEY.
I GUESS I HIT THE WRONG *C.*
"THE WRONG *C?!*"
ARE YOU *KIDDING* ME?
HEYYYY... *TWINS.*
FUCK OFF.

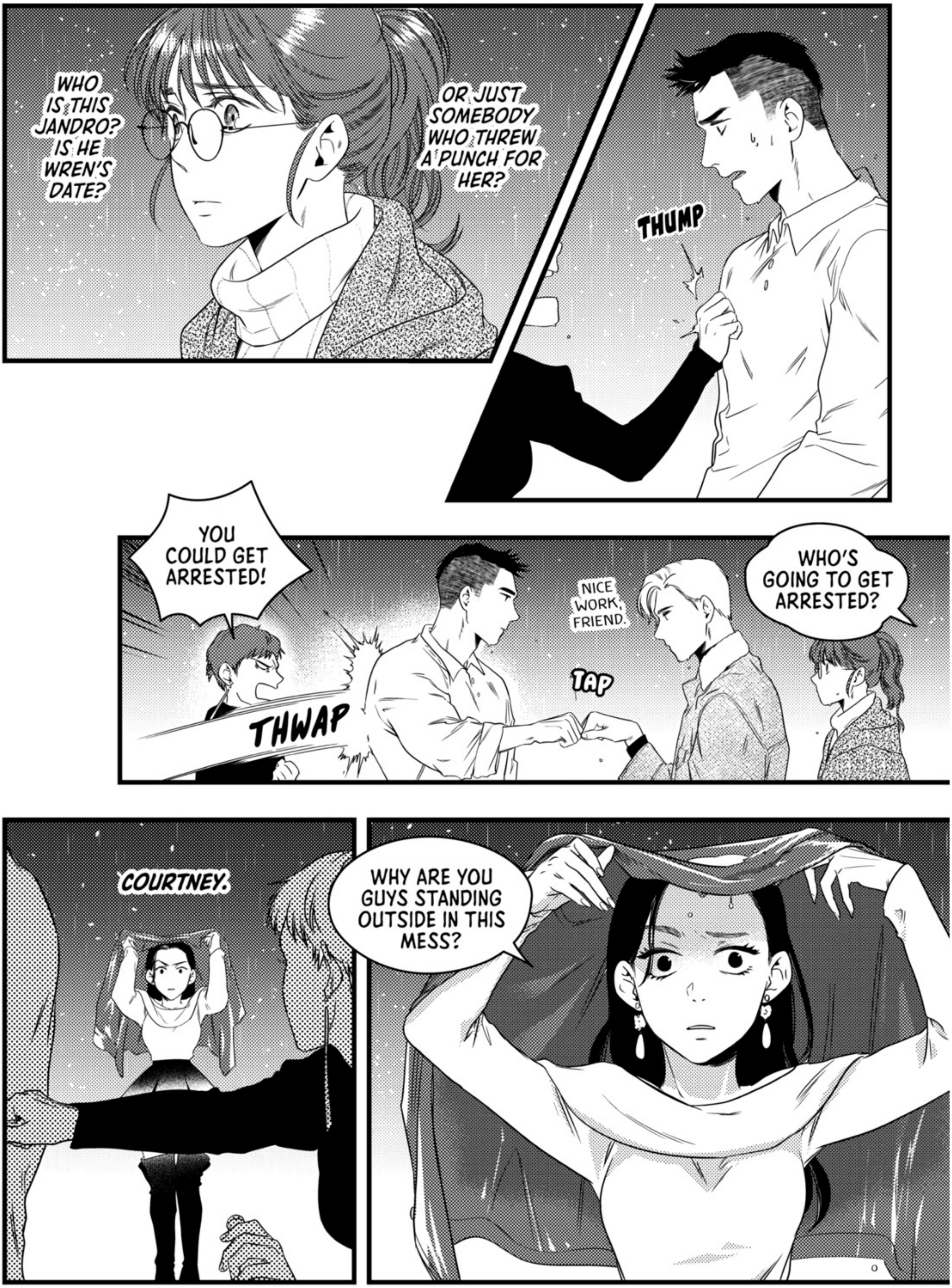

ARE YOU IN TROUBLE?
NO—
THEN WHY THE NINE-ONE-ONE?!
BECAUSE I WANTED COURTNEY TO COME QUICK!
THE GUY SHE LIKES IS PLAYING.
NINE-ONE-ONE IS FOR *EMERGENCIES*, WREN!
CALM DOWN, CATH.
IT'S NOT LIKE I *ACTUALLY* CALLED NINE-ONE-ONE.
DUDE. CHECK IT OUT—
TWINS.

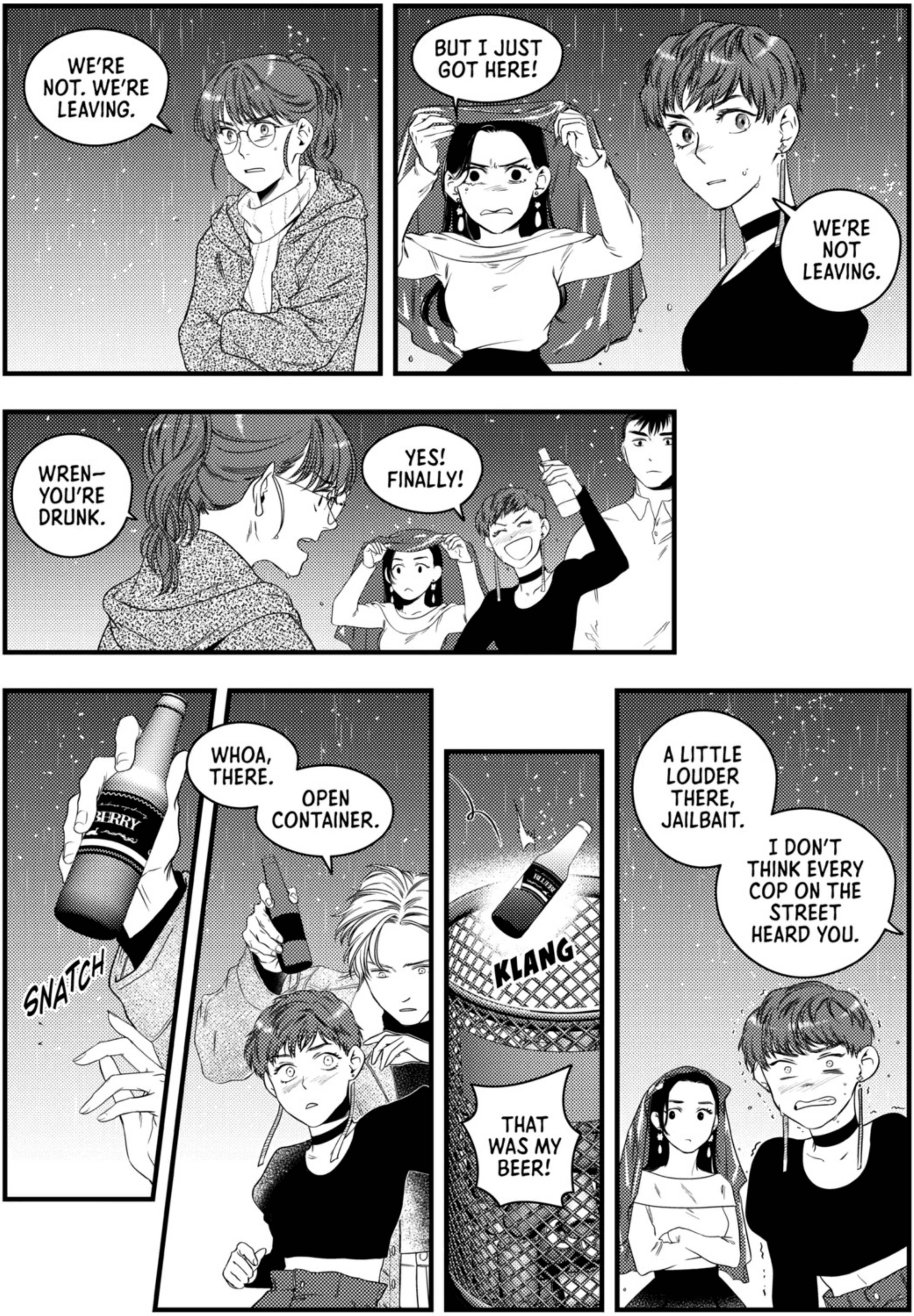

FREAKING TWINS, MAN. THAT'S THE FANTASY, RIGHT?
YOU REALIZE THAT THEY'RE *SISTERS*, RIGHT?
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT *INCEST*.
NO, DUDE, I'M TALKING ABOUT BUYING THEM DRINKS UNTIL THEY START MAKING OUT.
IS THAT WHAT HAPPENS WITH *YOU* AND *YOUR* SISTER?
WHO *RAISED* YOU?
LEVI, DON'T.
PULL
THIS HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.
!

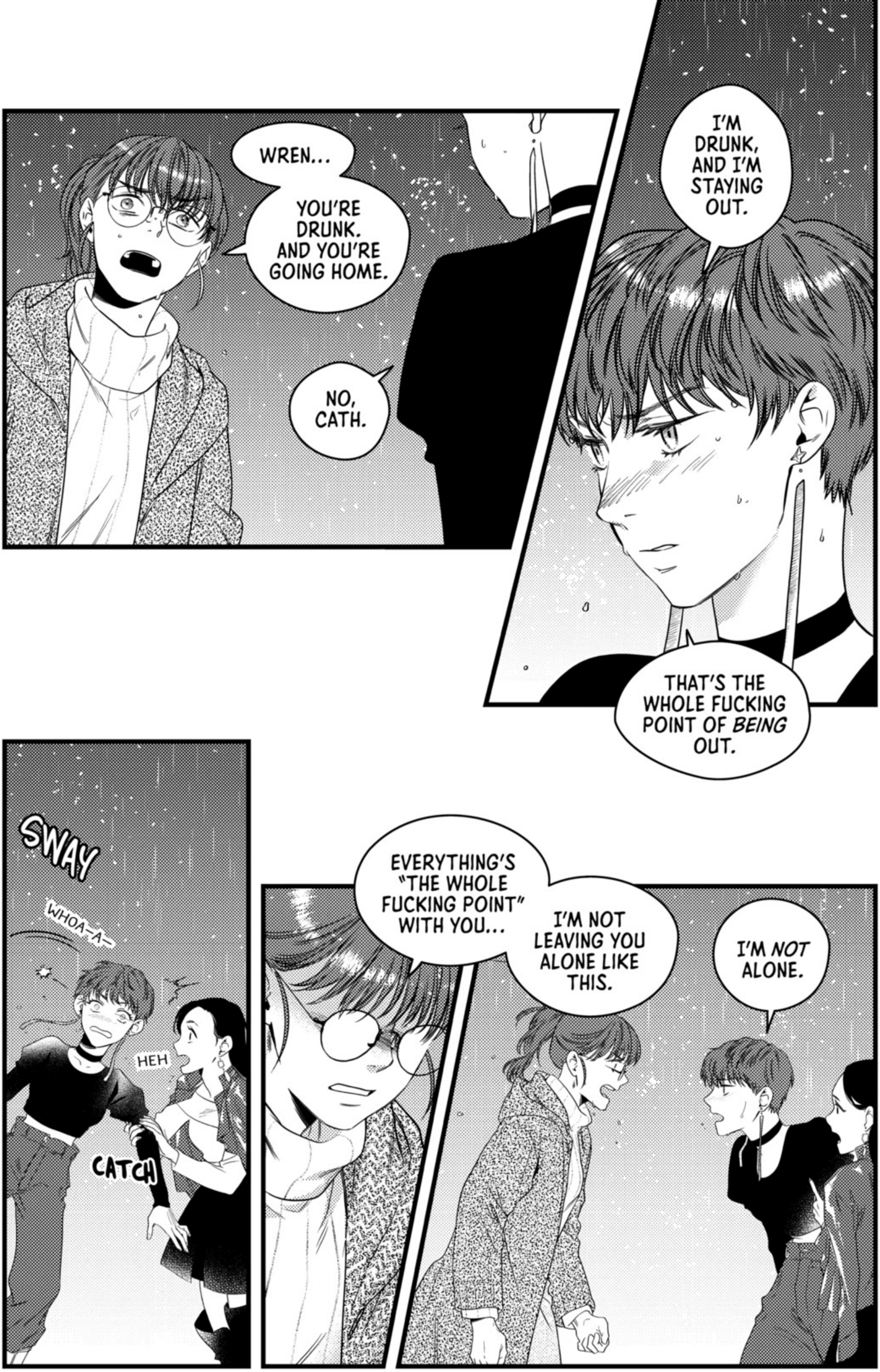

ALL THE TIME?!
Hey!
THESE TWO GIRLS HAVE *PARENTS.*
FWIP
AND THEY SHOULD *NEVER* HAVE TO WORRY THAT THEIR DAUGHTERS WILL END UP IN A BAR, DEBASING THEMSELVES...
...FOR SOME *PERVERT* WHO STILL JERKS OFF TO *GIRLS GONE WILD* VIDEOS.
DUDE. *TWINS.*
THE FANTASY, AM I RIGHT?
SWSH
THAT'S IT.

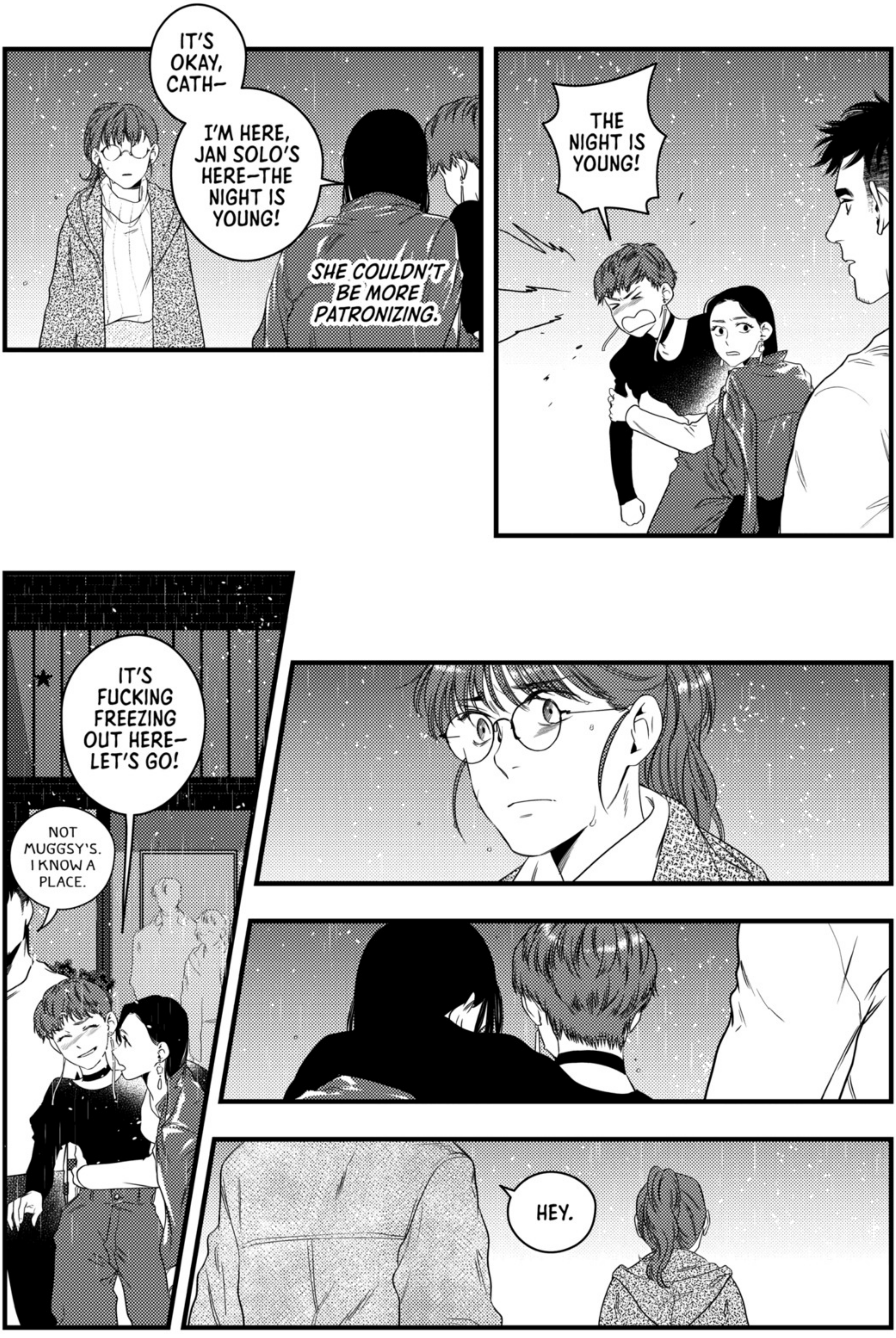

WHAM
JANDRO!
OWWWW
YOU'RE GONNA REGRET THAT!
OH, FUCK YOU, *FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC*!

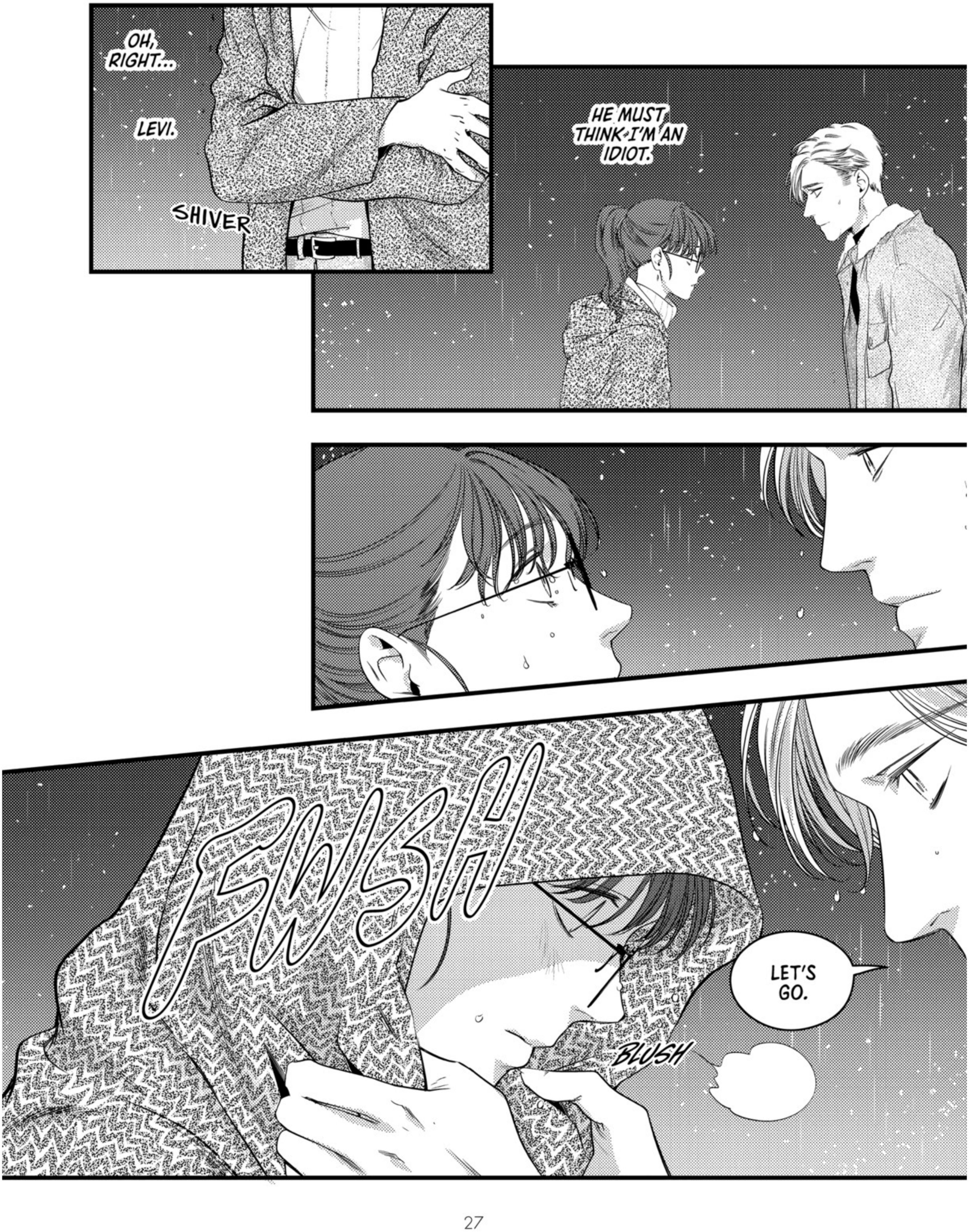

C'MON.
OUT, OUT, OUT.
OOF
EVERYTHING COOL, LEVI?
YEAH.
JUST A COUPLE OF DRUNKS.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT!

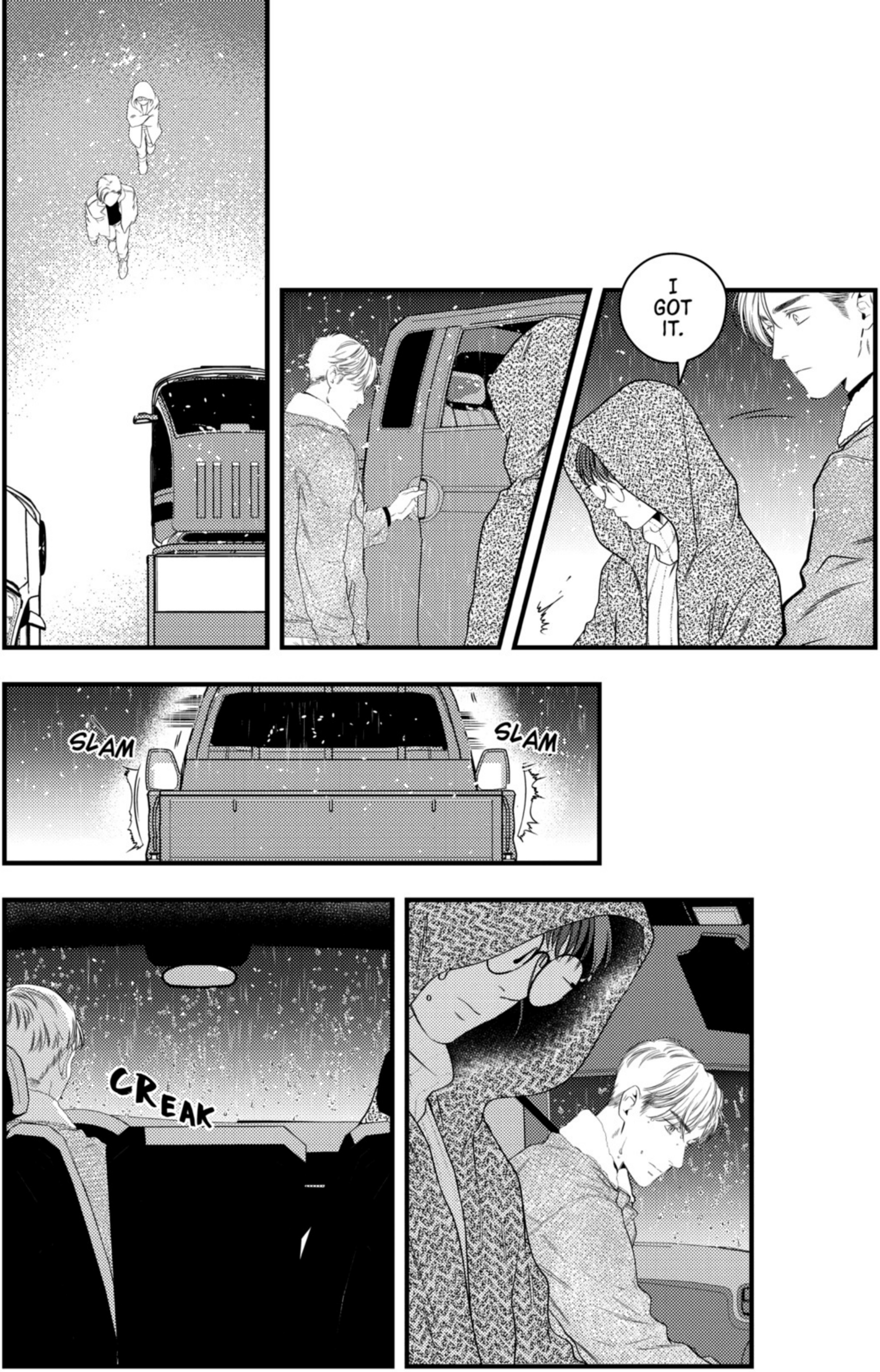

WHO IS THIS JANDRO? IS HE WREN'S DATE?
OR JUST SOMEBODY WHO THREW A PUNCH FOR HER?
THUMP
YOU COULD GET ARRESTED!
THWAP
NICE WORK, FRIEND.
TAP
WHO'S GOING TO GET ARRESTED?
COURTNEY.
WHY ARE YOU GUYS STANDING OUTSIDE IN THIS MESS?

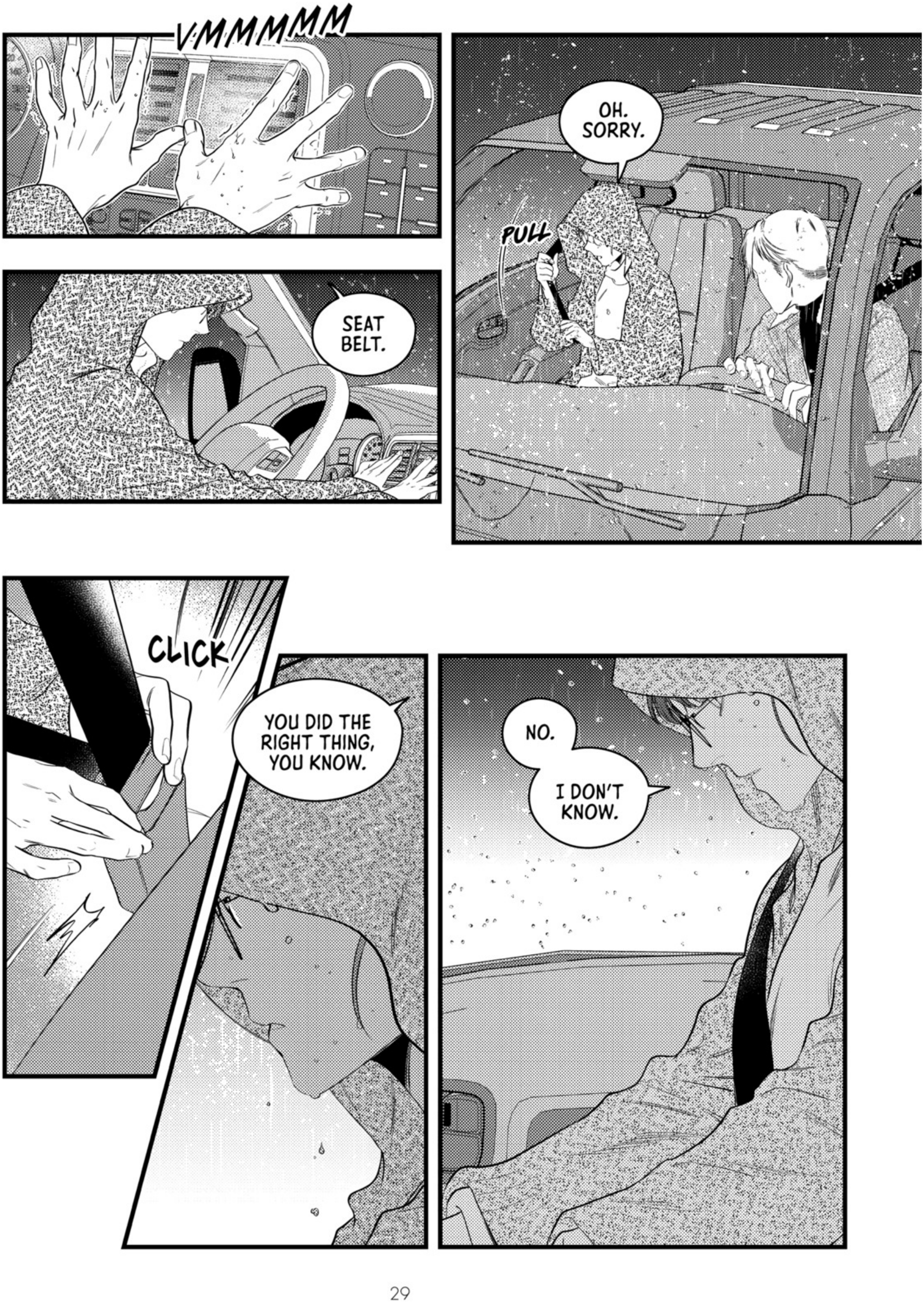

WE'RE NOT. WE'RE LEAVING.
BUT I JUST GOT HERE!
WE'RE NOT LEAVING.
WREN— YOU'RE DRUNK.
YES! FINALLY!
BERRY
SNATCH
WHOA, THERE.
OPEN CONTAINER.
KLANG
THAT WAS MY BEER!
A LITTLE LOUDER THERE, JAILBAIT.
I DON'T THINK EVERY COP ON THE STREET HEARD YOU.

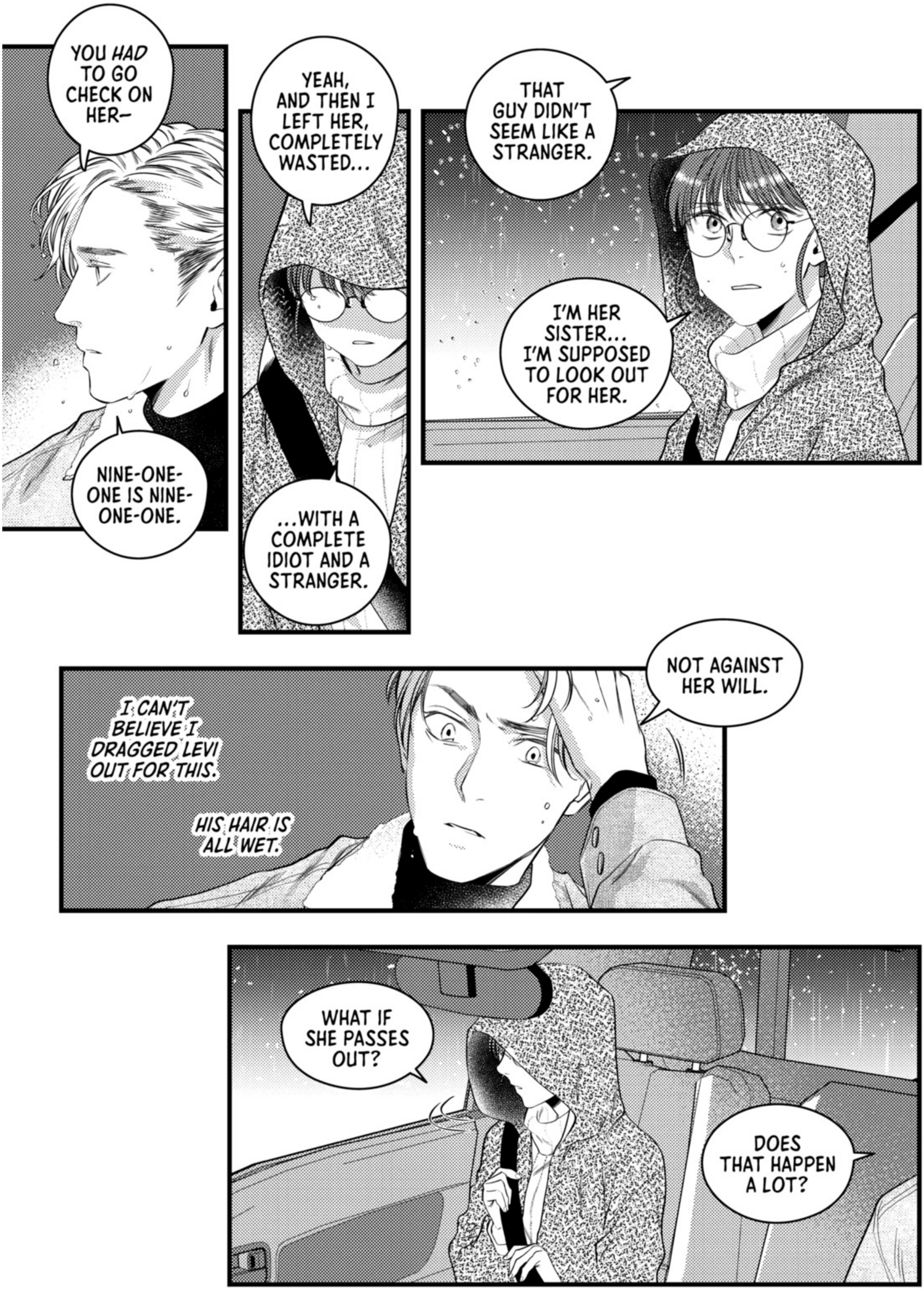

WREN...
YOU'RE DRUNK. AND YOU'RE GOING HOME.
NO, CATH.
I'M DRUNK, AND I'M STAYING OUT.
THAT'S THE WHOLE FUCKING POINT OF *BEING* OUT.
SWAY
WHOA-A-
HEH
CATCH
EVERYTHING'S "THE WHOLE FUCKING POINT" WITH YOU...
I'M NOT LEAVING YOU ALONE LIKE THIS.
I'M *NOT* ALONE.

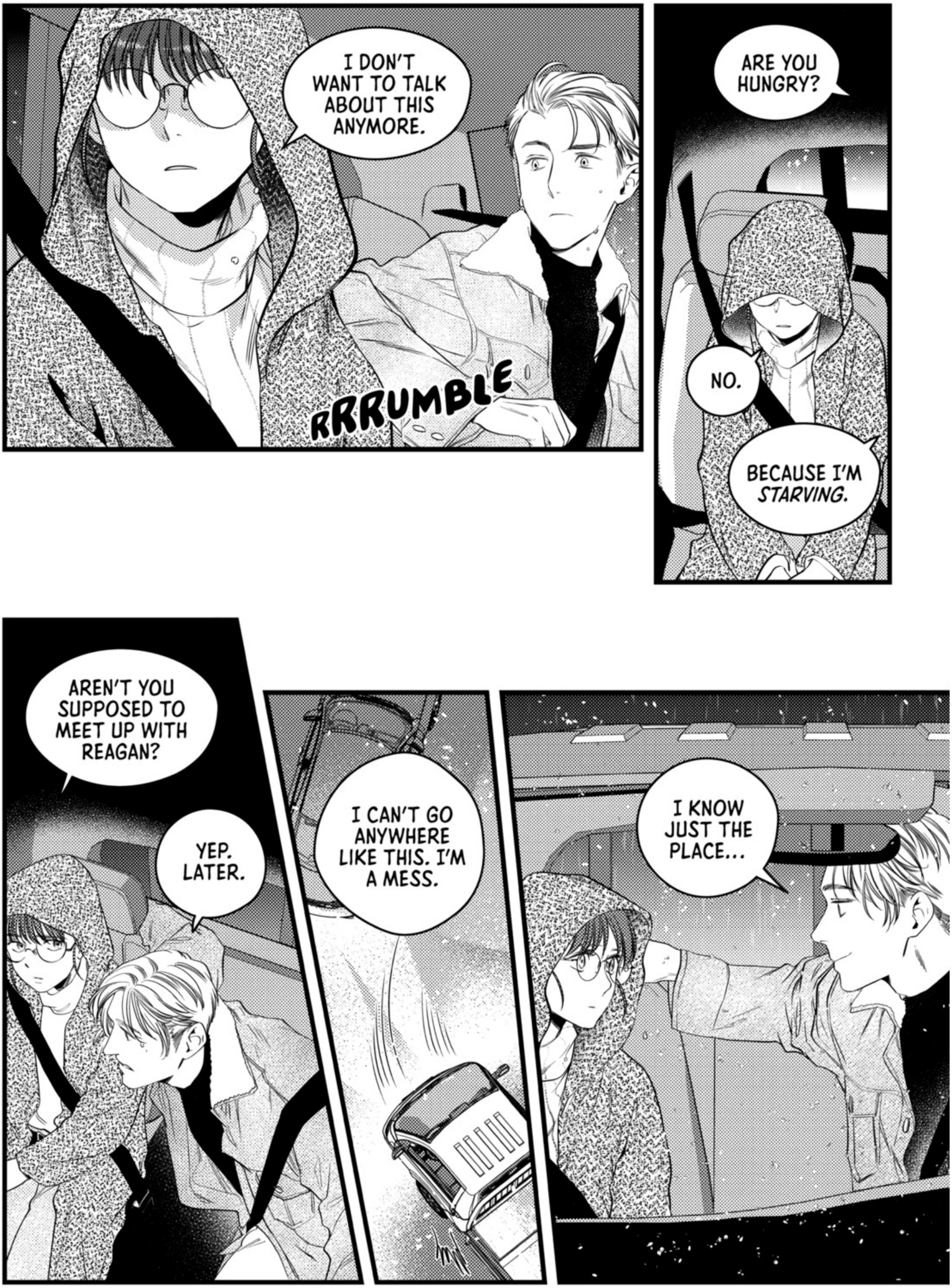

IT'S OKAY, CATH—
I'M HERE, JAN SOLO'S HERE—THE NIGHT IS YOUNG!
SHE COULDN'T BE MORE PATRONIZING.
THE NIGHT IS YOUNG!
IT'S FUCKING FREEZING OUT HERE—LET'S GO!
NOT MUGGSY'S. I KNOW A PLACE.
HEY.

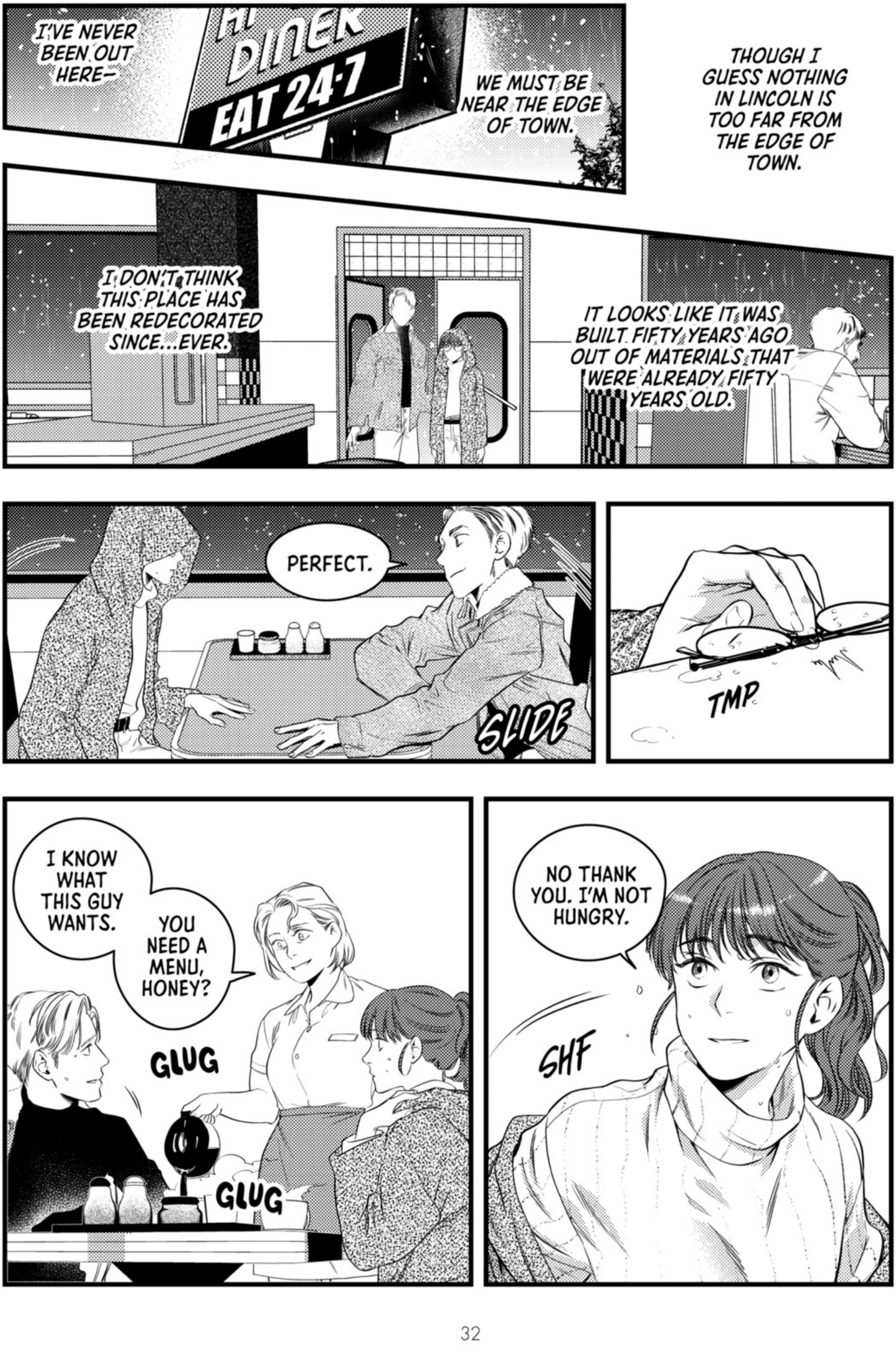

OH, RIGHT...
LEVI.
SHIVER
HE MUST THINK I'M AN IDIOT.
FWSH
LET'S GO.
BLUSH

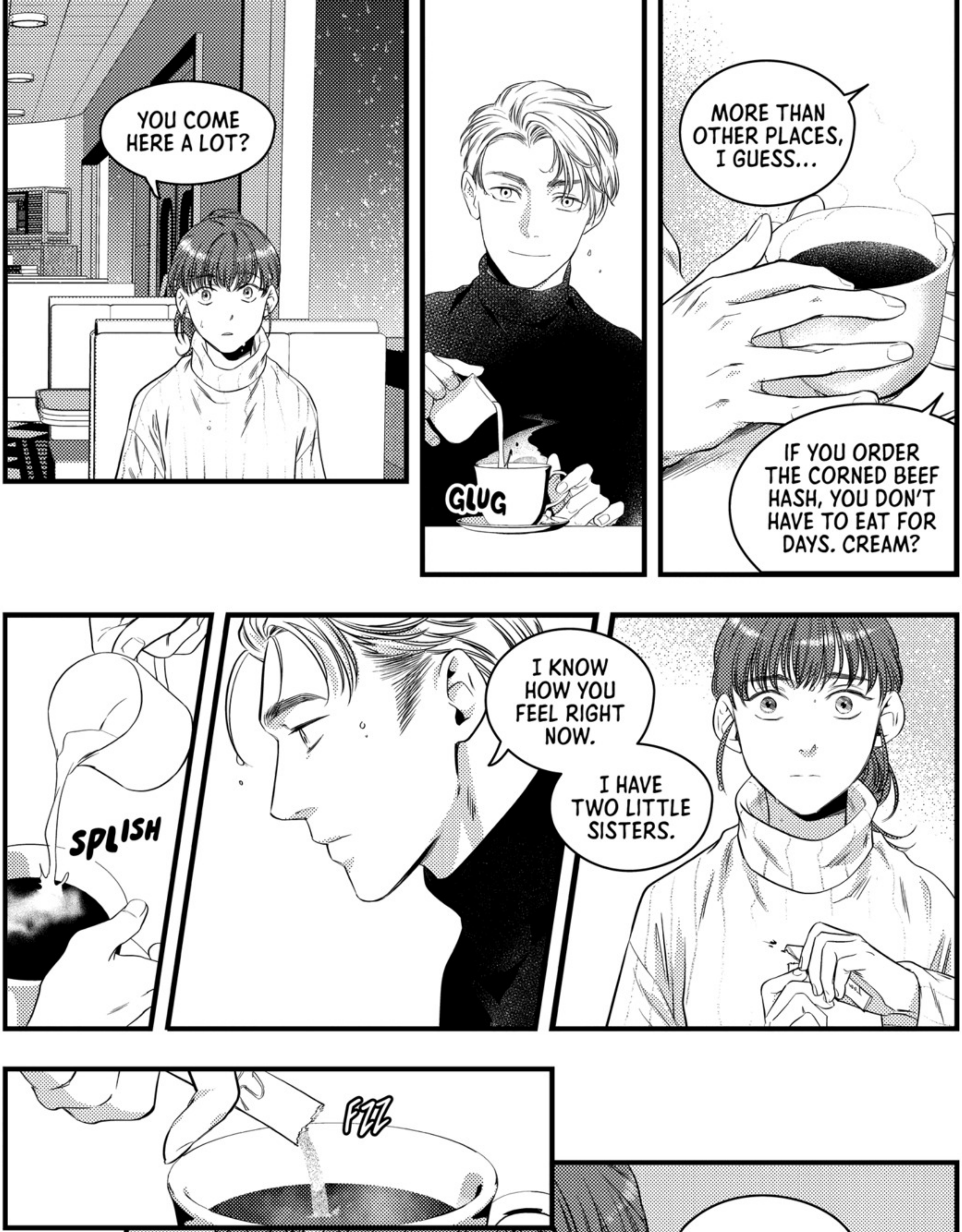

I GOT IT.
SLAM
SLAM
CREAK

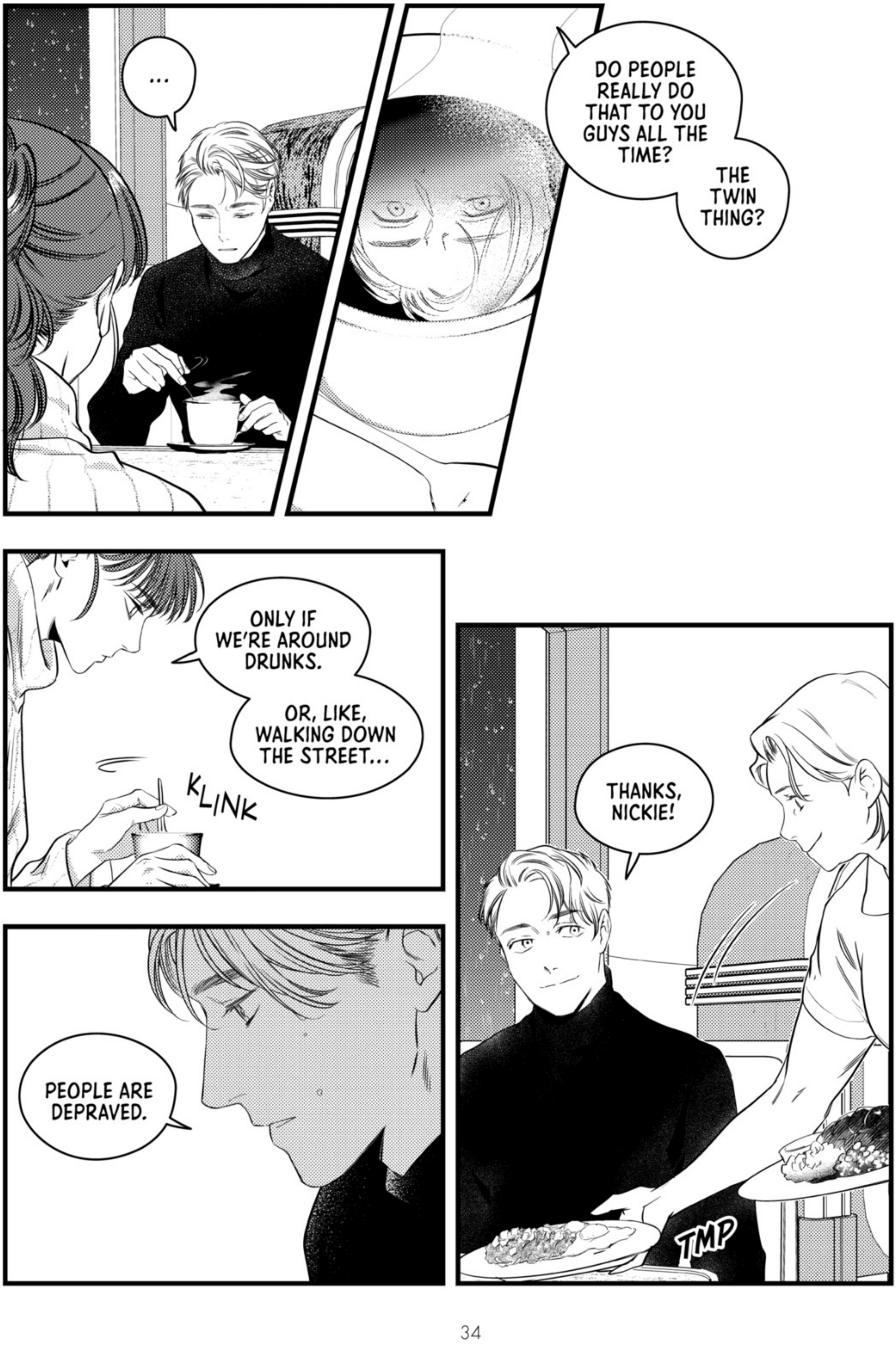

VMMMMM
SEAT BELT.
OH. SORRY.
PULL
CLICK
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, YOU KNOW.
NO.
I DON'T KNOW.

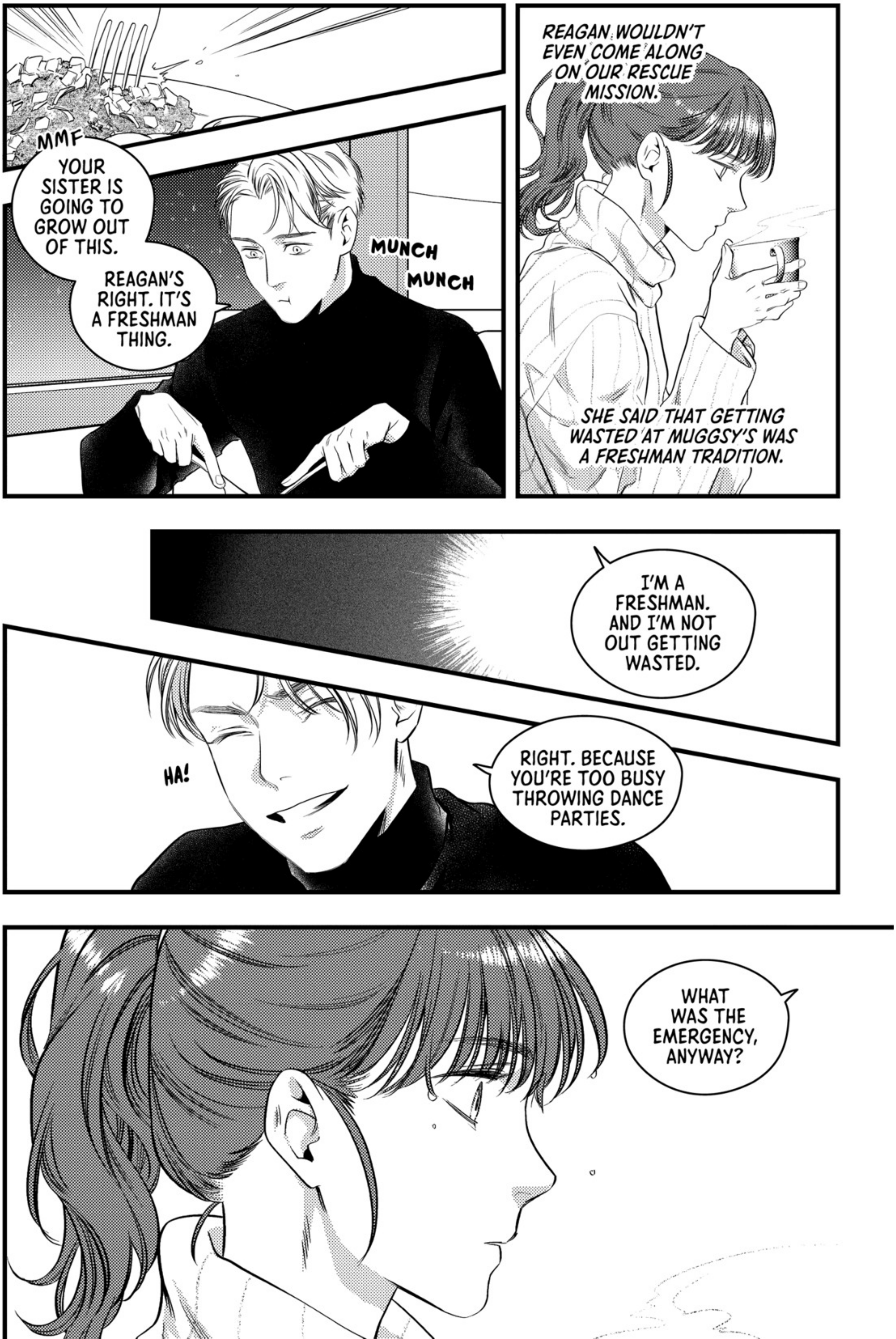

YOU *HAD* TO GO CHECK ON HER—
NINE-ONE-ONE IS NINE-ONE-ONE.
YEAH, AND THEN I LEFT HER, COMPLETELY WASTED...
...WITH A COMPLETE IDIOT AND A STRANGER.
THAT GUY DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A STRANGER.
I'M HER SISTER... I'M SUPPOSED TO LOOK OUT FOR HER.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I DRAGGED LEVI OUT FOR THIS.
HIS HAIR IS ALL WET.
NOT AGAINST HER WILL.
WHAT IF SHE PASSES OUT?
DOES THAT HAPPEN A LOT?

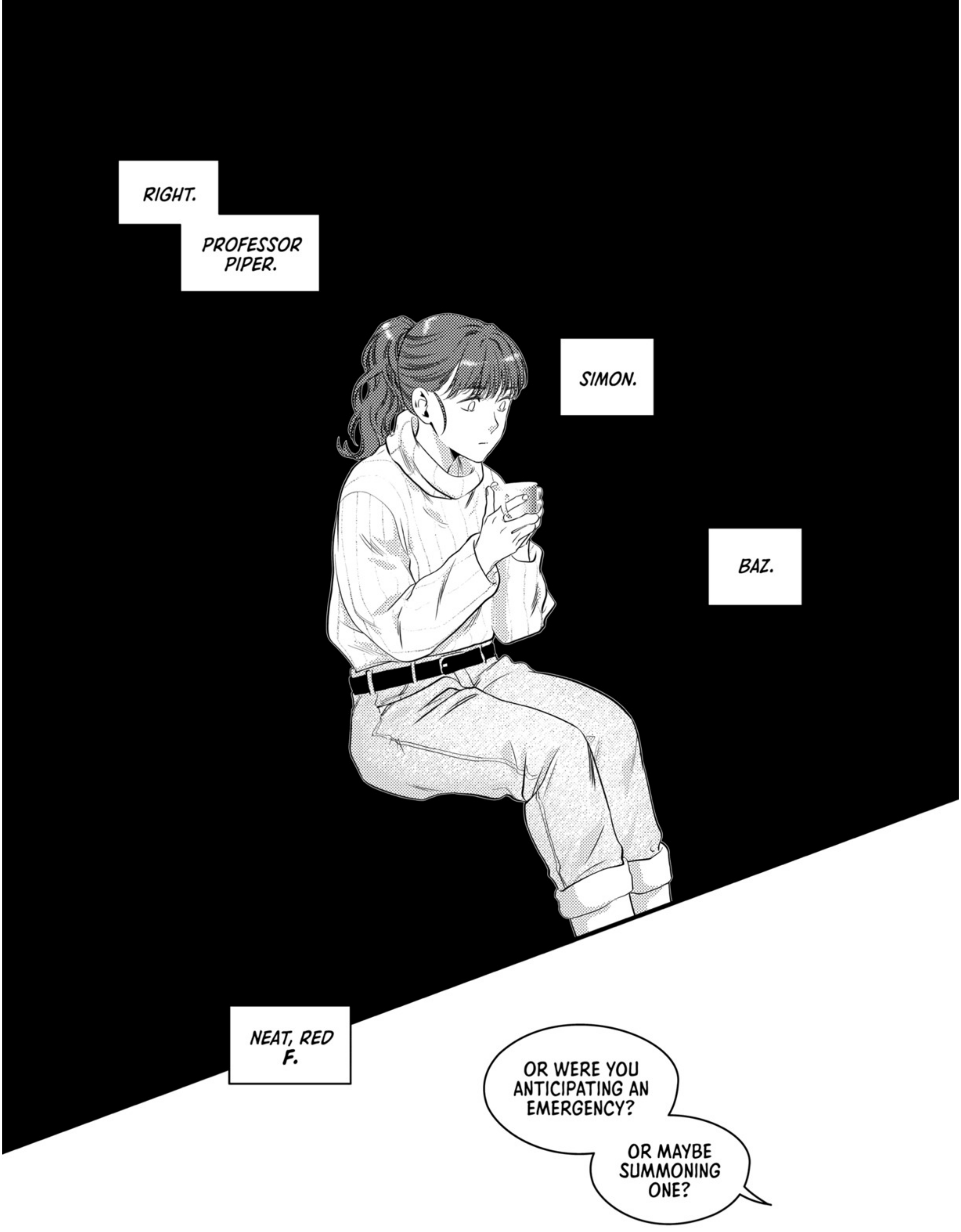

I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS ANYMORE.
RRRUMBLE
ARE YOU HUNGRY?
NO.
BECAUSE I'M *STARVING.*
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO MEET UP WITH REAGAN?
YEP. LATER.
I CAN'T GO ANYWHERE LIKE THIS. I'M A MESS.
I KNOW JUST THE PLACE...

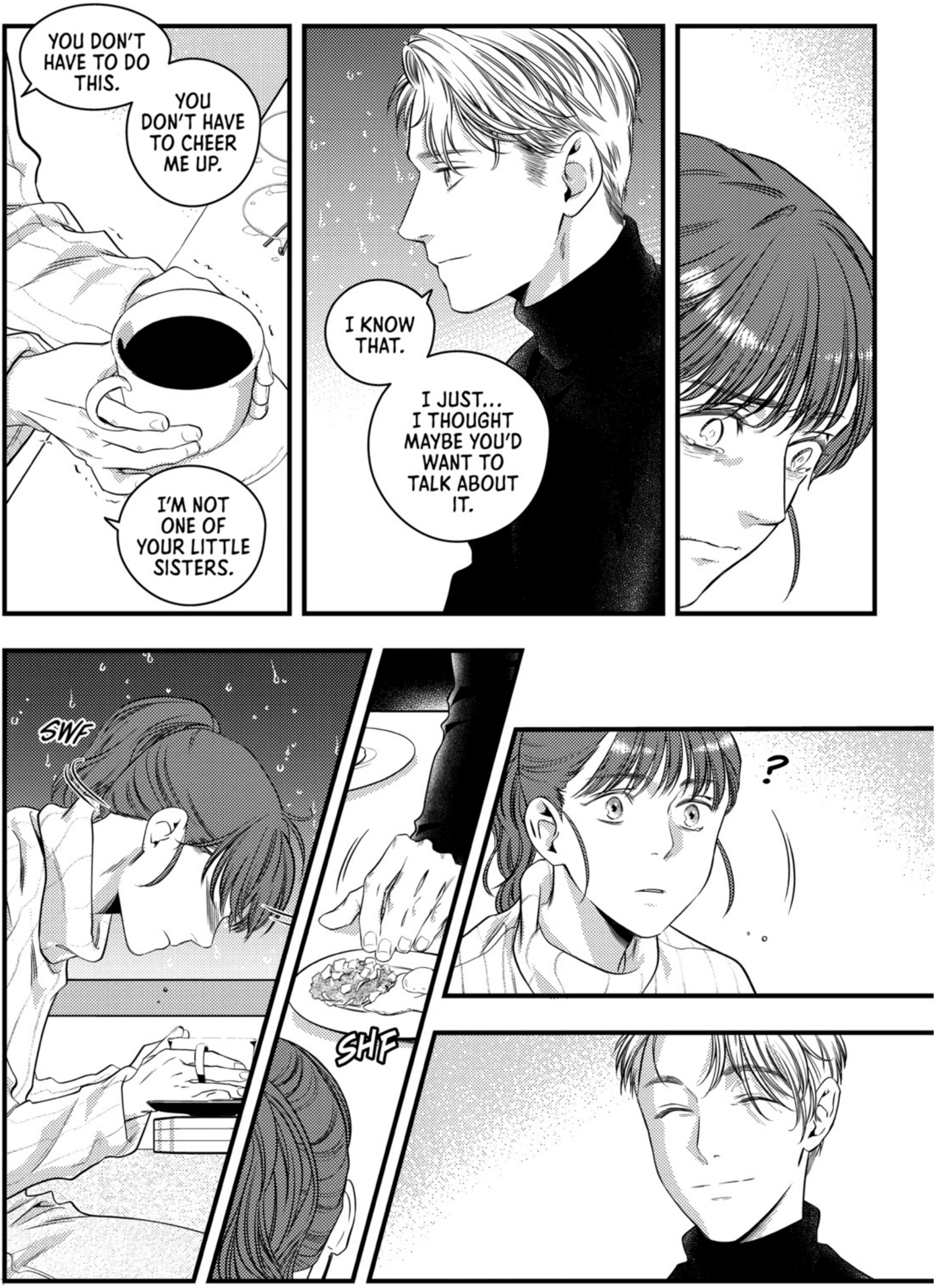

I'VE NEVER BEEN OUT HERE—
DINER
EAT 24-7
WE MUST BE NEAR THE EDGE OF TOWN.
THOUGH I GUESS NOTHING IN LINCOLN IS TOO FAR FROM THE EDGE OF TOWN.
I DON'T THINK THIS PLACE HAS BEEN REDECORATED SINCE...EVER.
IT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS BUILT FIFTY YEARS AGO OUT OF MATERIALS THAT WERE ALREADY FIFTY YEARS OLD.
PERFECT.
SLIDE
TMP
I KNOW WHAT THIS GUY WANTS.
YOU NEED A MENU, HONEY?
GLUG
GLUG
NO THANK YOU. I'M NOT HUNGRY.
SHF

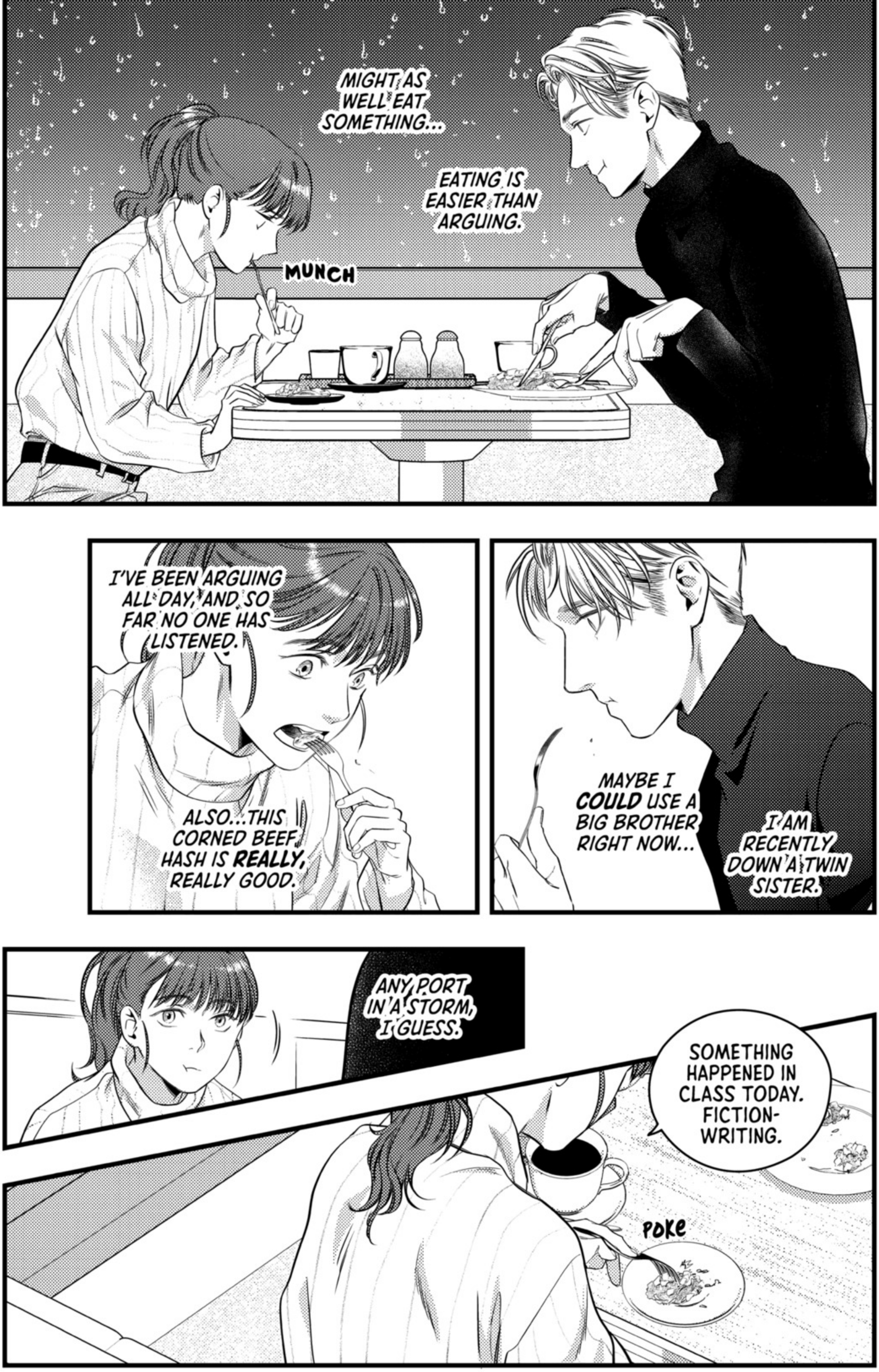

YOU COME HERE A LOT?
GLUG
MORE THAN OTHER PLACES, I GUESS...
IF YOU ORDER THE CORNED BEEF HASH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO EAT FOR DAYS. CREAM?
SPLISH
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW.
I HAVE TWO LITTLE SISTERS.
FZZ
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I FEEL.
SHE'S NOT JUST MY SISTER.

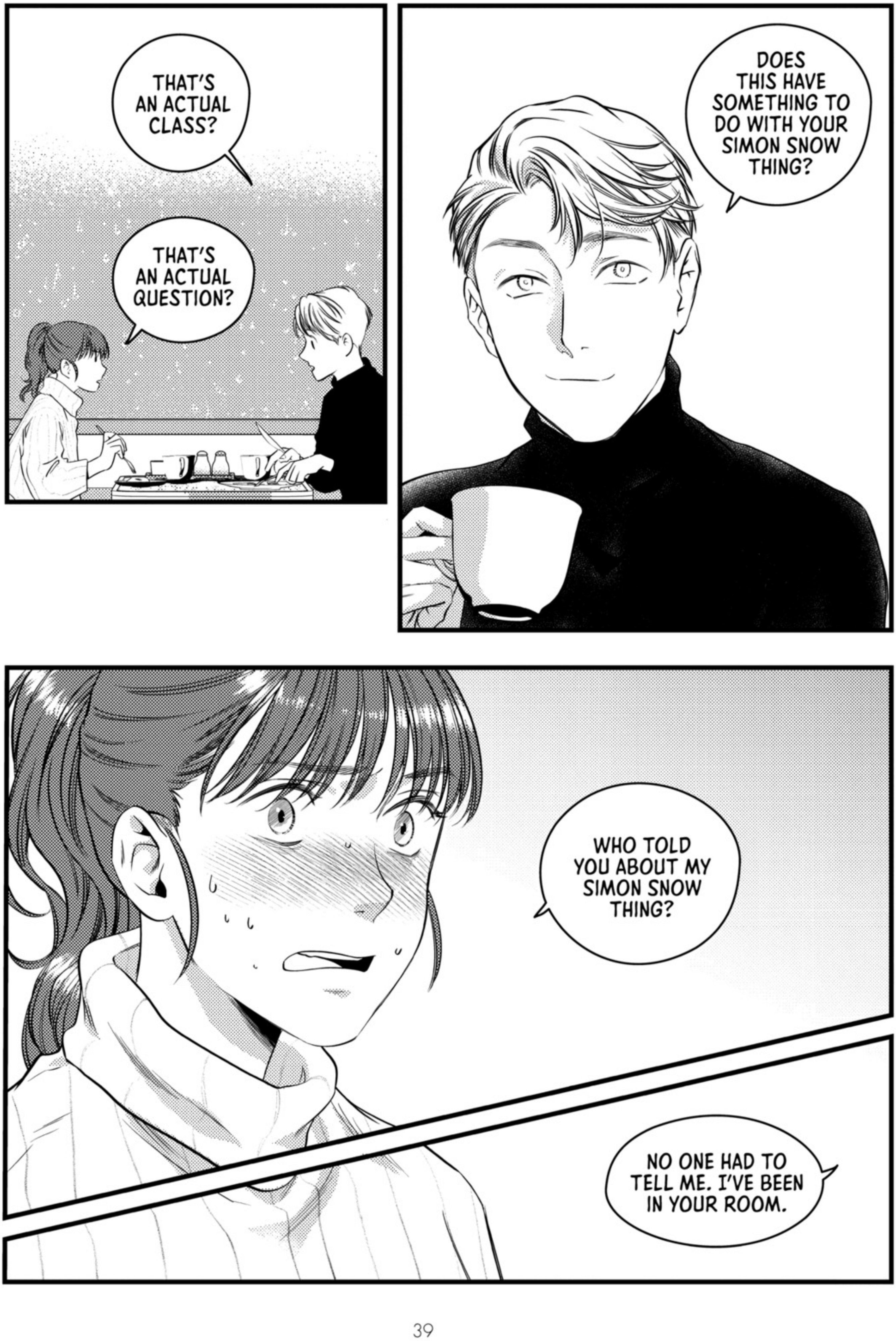

...
DO PEOPLE REALLY DO THAT TO YOU GUYS ALL THE TIME?
THE TWIN THING?
ONLY IF WE'RE AROUND DRUNKS.
OR, LIKE, WALKING DOWN THE STREET...
KLINK
PEOPLE ARE DEPRAVED.
THANKS, NICKIE!
TMP

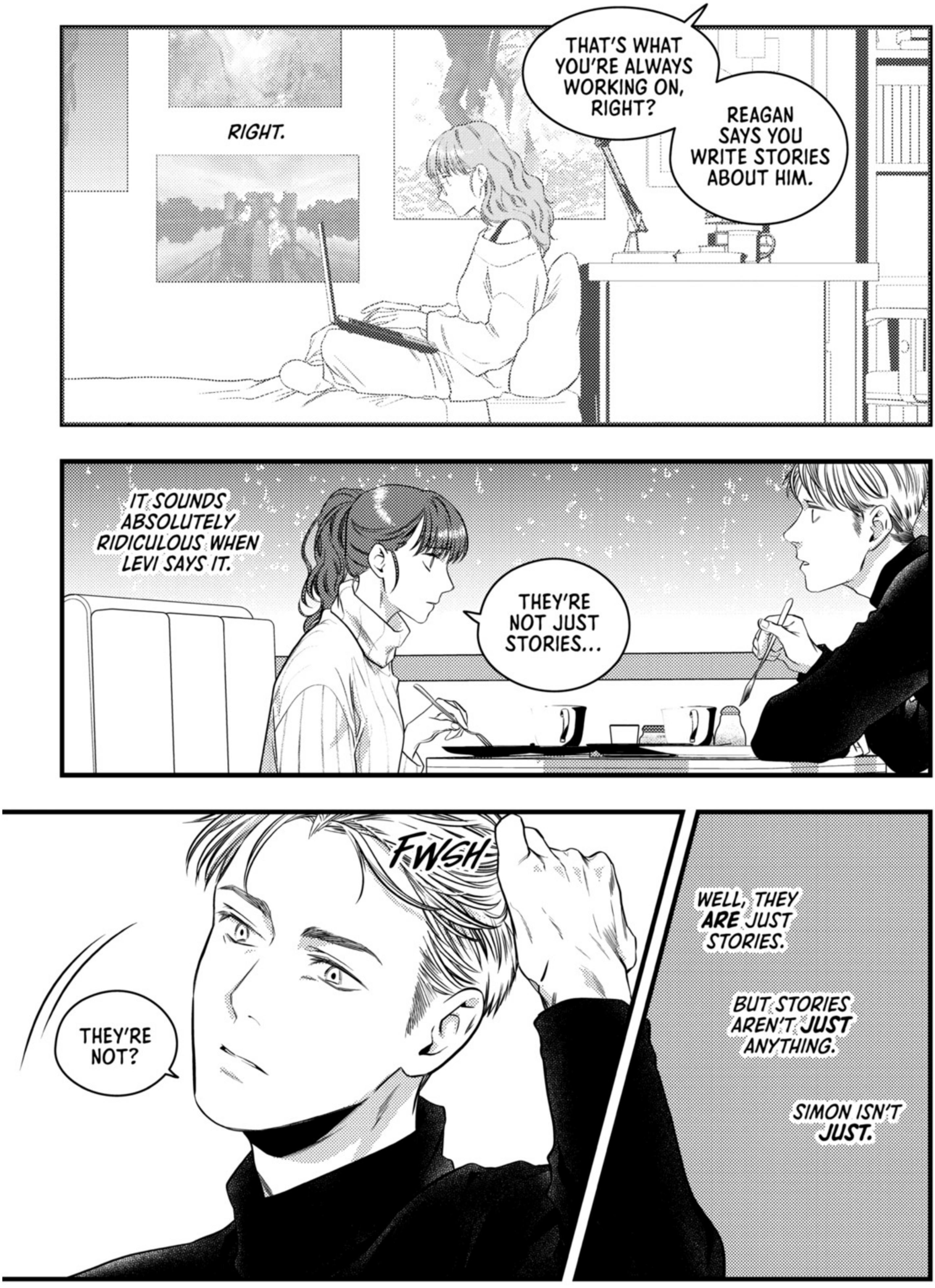

MMF
YOUR SISTER IS GOING TO GROW OUT OF THIS.
REAGAN'S RIGHT. IT'S A FRESHMAN THING.
MUNCH
MUNCH
REAGAN WOULDN'T EVEN COME ALONG ON OUR RESCUE MISSION.
SHE SAID THAT GETTING WASTED AT MUGGSY'S WAS A FRESHMAN TRADITION.
I'M A FRESHMAN. AND I'M NOT OUT GETTING WASTED.
HA!
RIGHT. BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO BUSY THROWING DANCE PARTIES.
WHAT WAS THE EMERGENCY, ANYWAY?

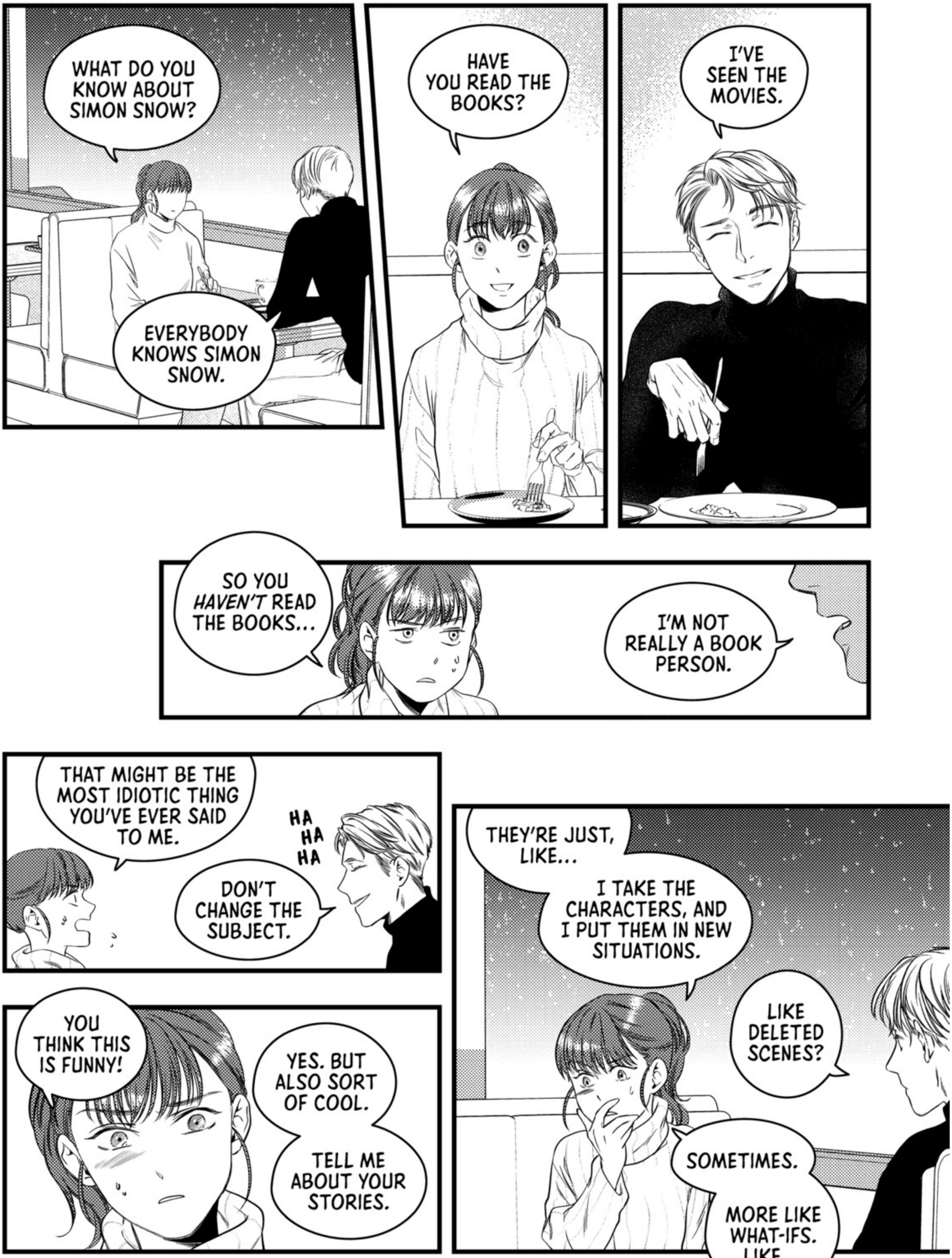

RIGHT.
PROFESSOR PIPER.
SIMON.
BAZ.
NEAT, RED F.
OR WERE YOU ANTICIPATING AN EMERGENCY?
OR MAYBE SUMMONING ONE?

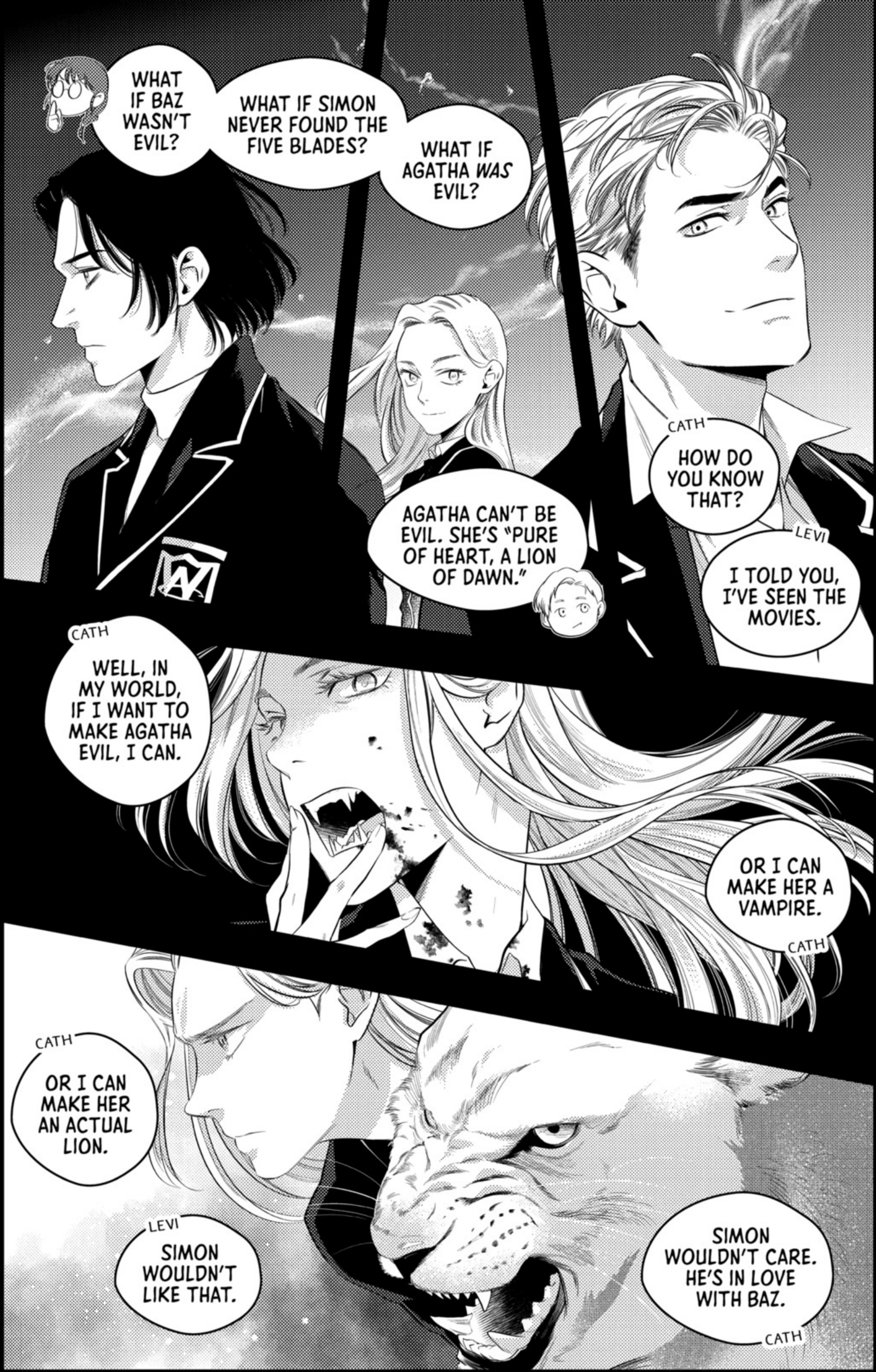

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHEER ME UP.
I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR LITTLE SISTERS.
I KNOW THAT.
I JUST... I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
SWF
SHF
?

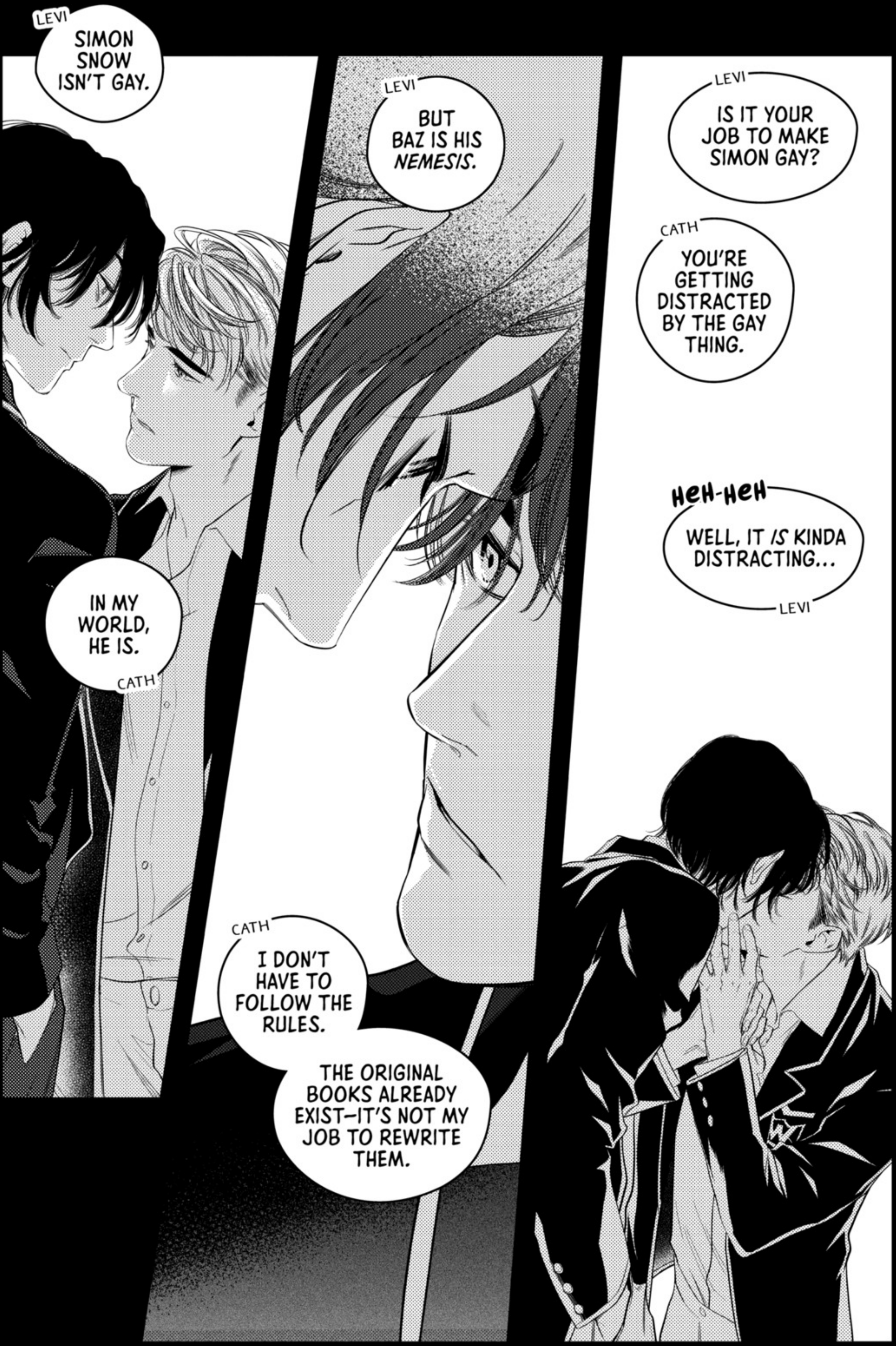

MIGHT AS WELL EAT SOMETHING...
EATING IS EASIER THAN ARGUING.
MUNCH
I'VE BEEN ARGUING ALL DAY, AND SO FAR NO ONE HAS LISTENED.
ALSO...THIS CORNED BEEF HASH IS **REALLY**, REALLY GOOD.
MAYBE I **COULD** USE A BIG BROTHER RIGHT NOW...
I AM RECENTLY DOWN A TWIN SISTER.
ANY PORT IN A STORM, I GUESS.
SOMETHING HAPPENED IN CLASS TODAY. FICTION-WRITING.
POKE

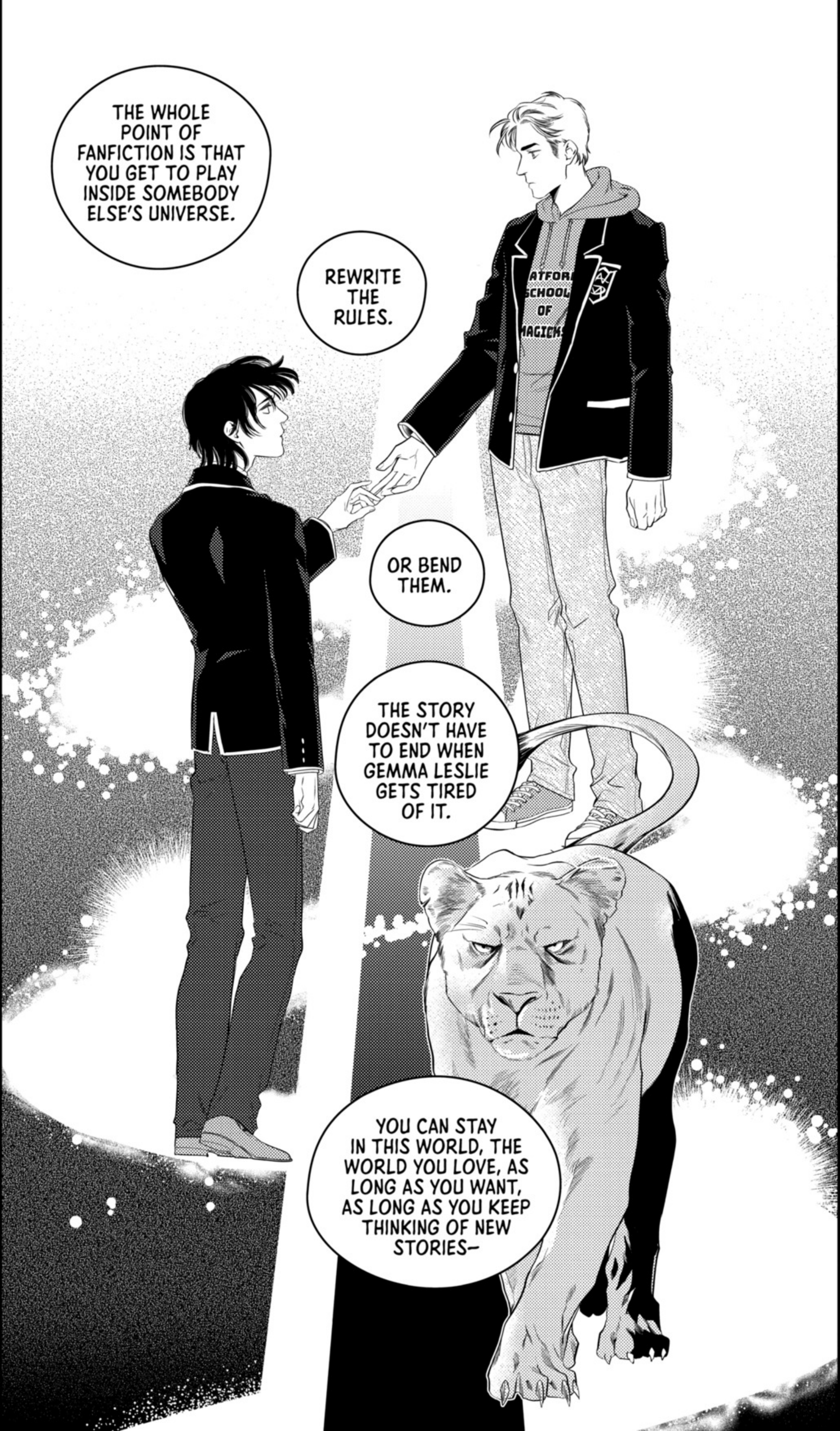

THAT'S AN ACTUAL CLASS?
THAT'S AN ACTUAL QUESTION?
DOES THIS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR SIMON SNOW THING?
WHO TOLD YOU ABOUT MY SIMON SNOW THING?
NO ONE HAD TO TELL ME. I'VE BEEN IN YOUR ROOM.

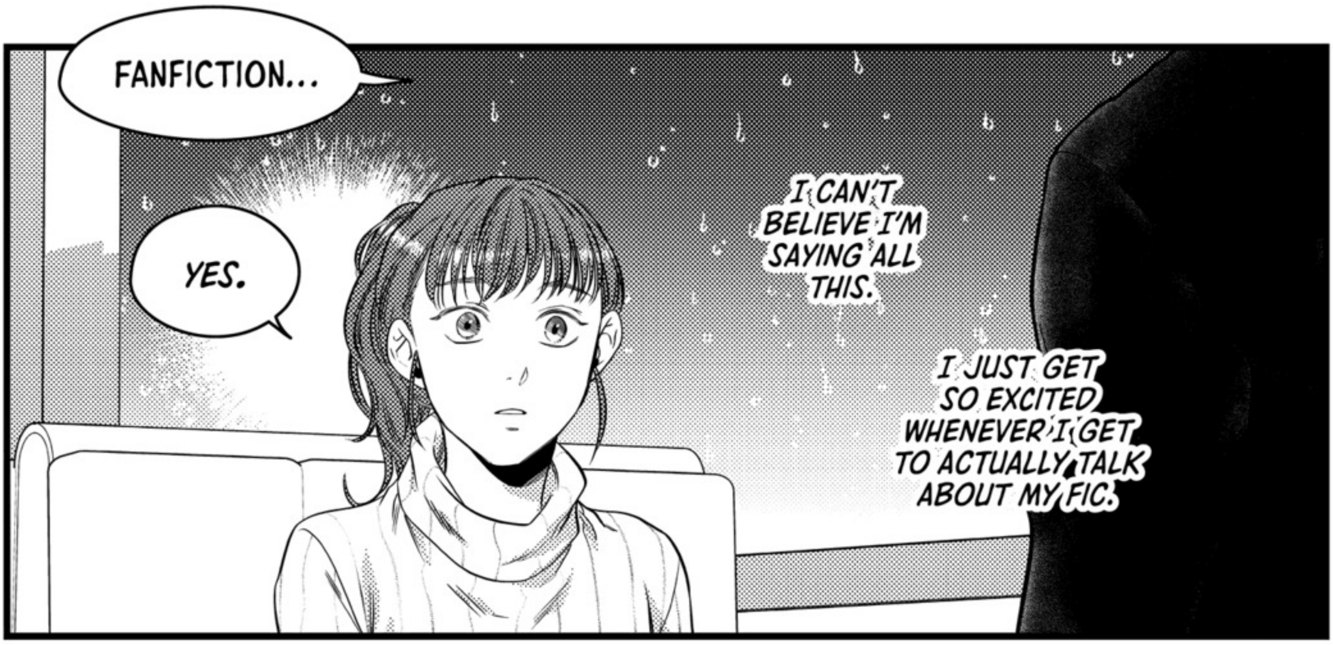

THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE ALWAYS WORKING ON, RIGHT?
REAGAN SAYS YOU WRITE STORIES ABOUT HIM.
RIGHT.
IT SOUNDS ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS WHEN LEVI SAYS IT.
THEY'RE NOT JUST STORIES...
FWSH
THEY'RE NOT?
WELL, THEY ARE JUST STORIES.
BUT STORIES AREN'T JUST ANYTHING.
SIMON ISN'T JUST.

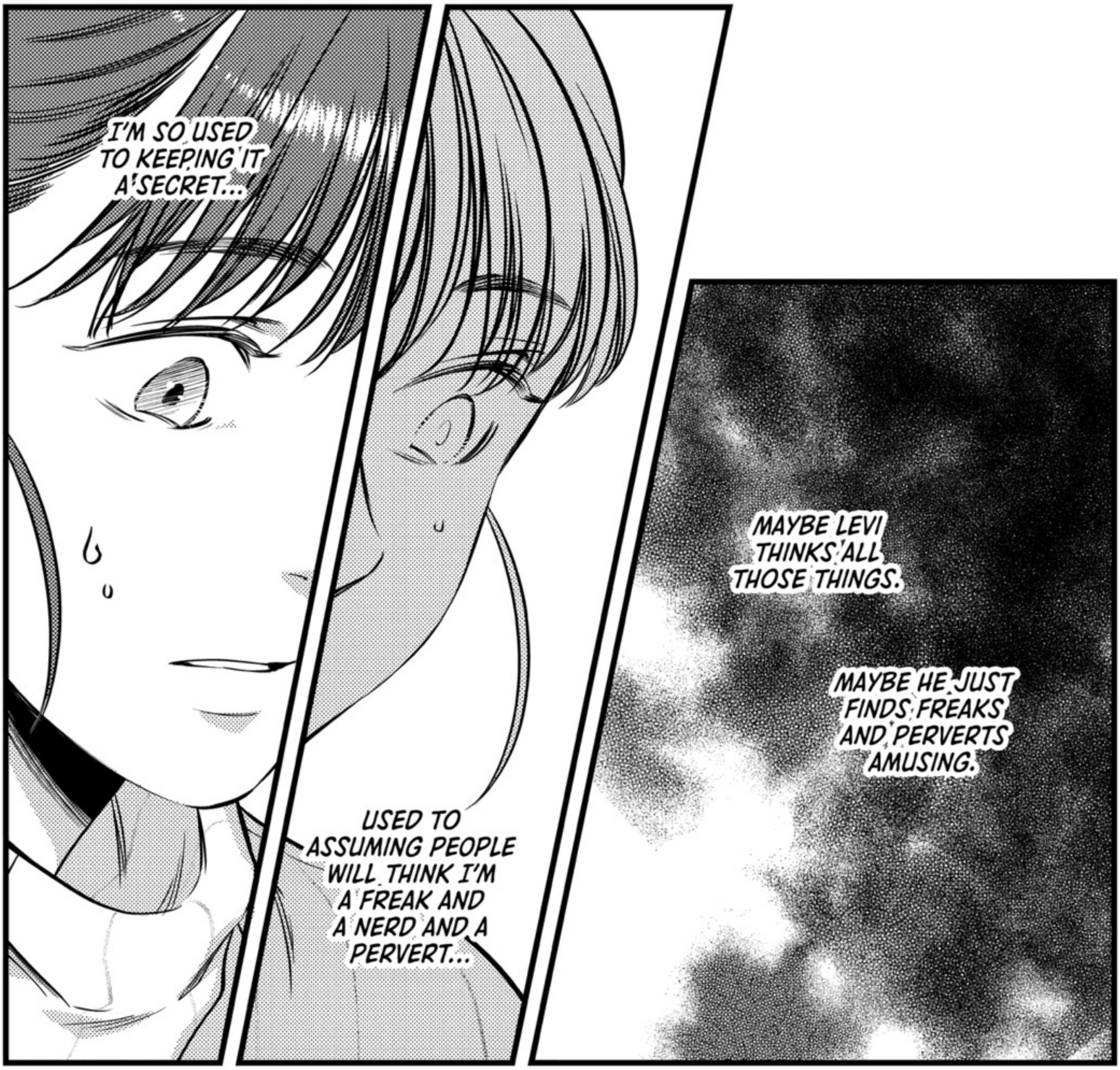

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SIMON SNOW?
EVERYBODY KNOWS SIMON SNOW.
HAVE YOU READ THE BOOKS?
I'VE SEEN THE MOVIES.
SO YOU *HAVEN'T* READ THE BOOKS...
I'M NOT REALLY A BOOK PERSON.
THAT MIGHT BE THE MOST IDIOTIC THING YOU'VE EVER SAID TO ME.
HA HA HA
DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT.
YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY!
YES. BUT ALSO SORT OF COOL.
TELL ME ABOUT YOUR STORIES.
THEY'RE JUST, LIKE...
I TAKE THE CHARACTERS, AND I PUT THEM IN NEW SITUATIONS.
LIKE DELETED SCENES?
SOMETIMES.
MORE LIKE WHAT-IFS. LIKE...

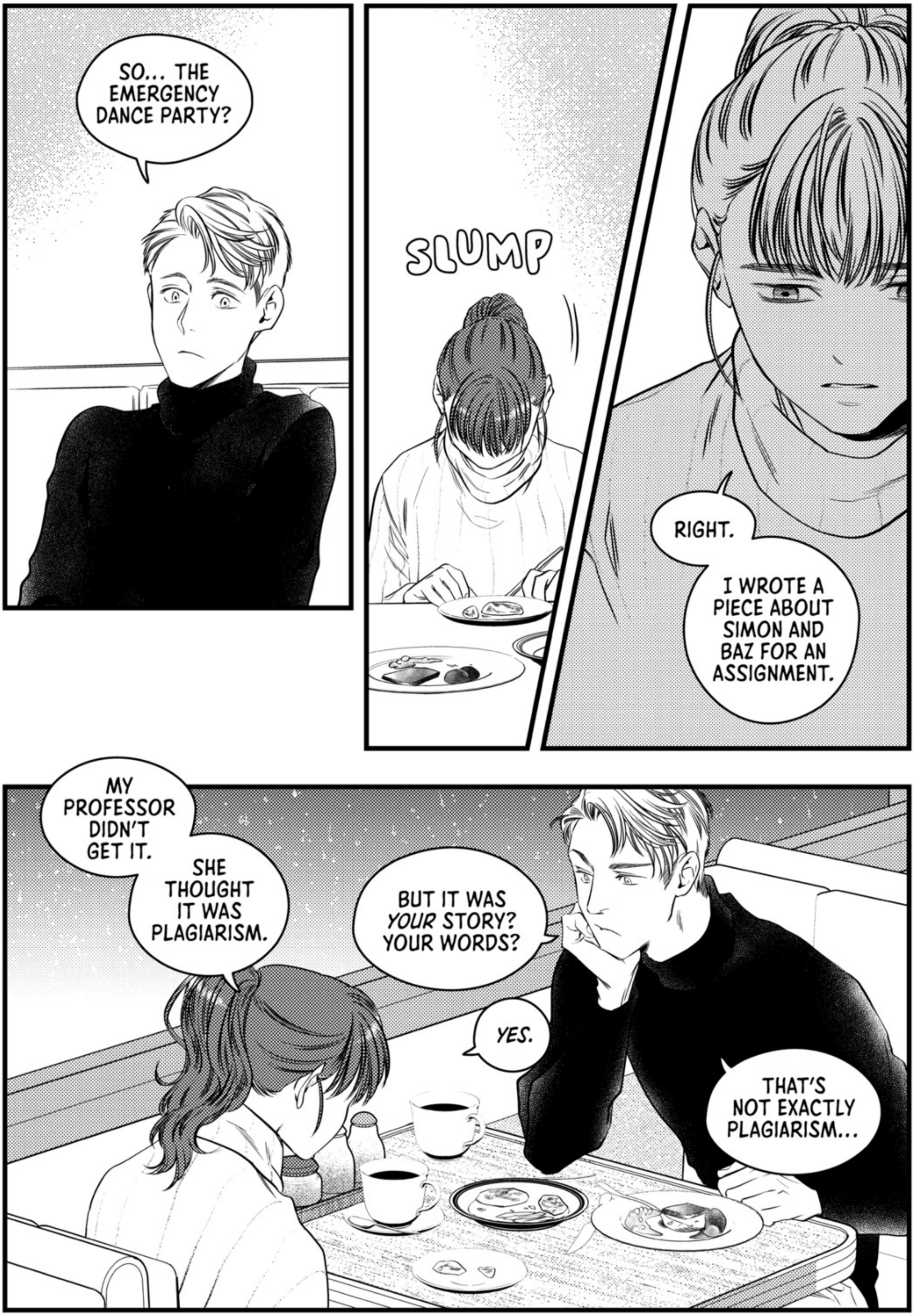

WHAT IF BAZ WASN'T EVIL?
WHAT IF SIMON NEVER FOUND THE FIVE BLADES?
WHAT IF AGATHA *WAS* EVIL?
CATH
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
AGATHA CAN'T BE EVIL. SHE'S "PURE OF HEART, A LION OF DAWN."
LEVI
I TOLD YOU, I'VE SEEN THE MOVIES.
CATH
WELL, IN MY WORLD, IF I WANT TO MAKE AGATHA EVIL, I CAN.
OR I CAN MAKE HER A VAMPIRE.
CATH
CATH
OR I CAN MAKE HER AN ACTUAL LION.
LEVI
SIMON WOULDN'T LIKE THAT.
SIMON WOULDN'T CARE. HE'S IN LOVE WITH BAZ.
CATH

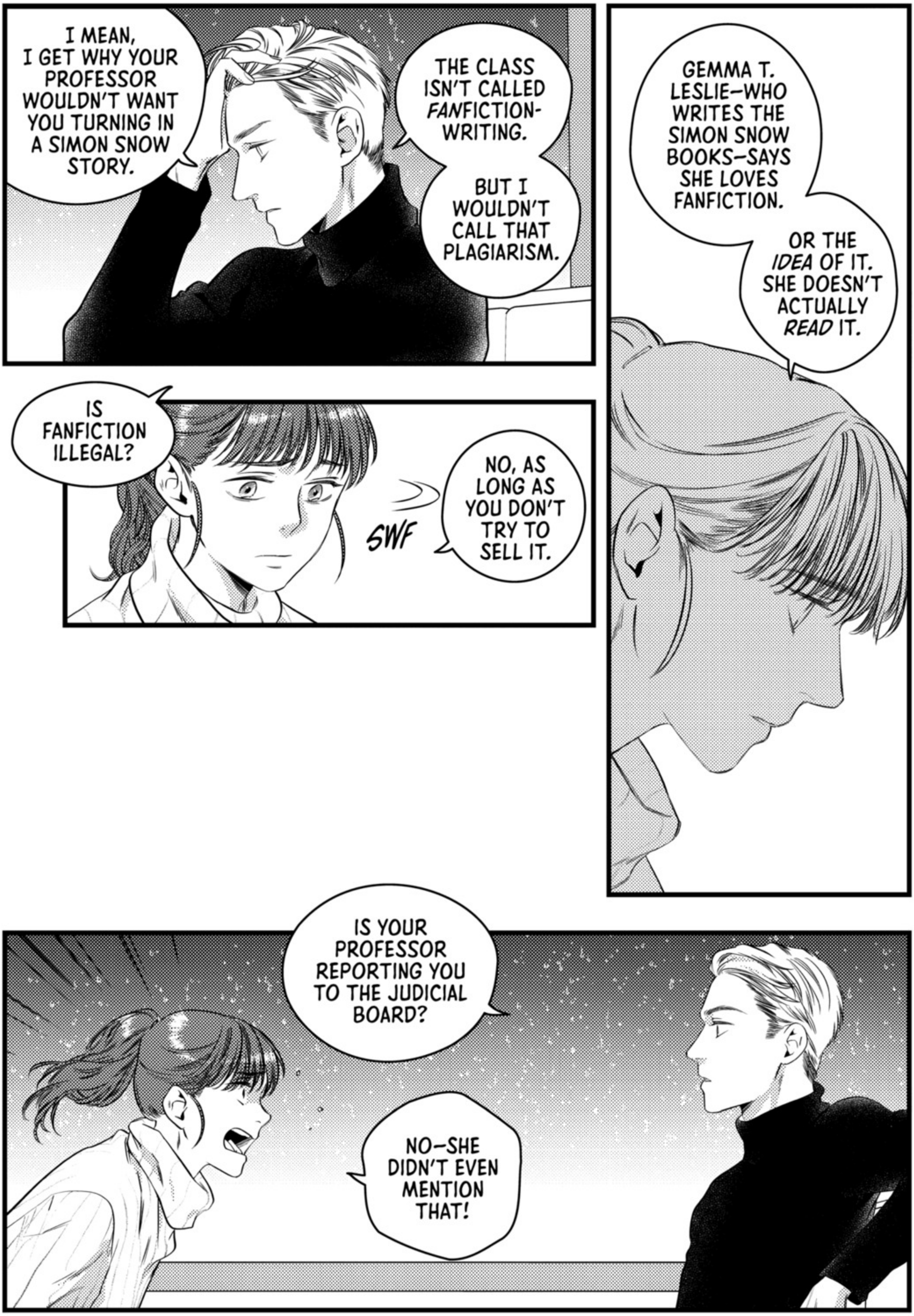

LEVI
SIMON SNOW ISN'T GAY.
IN MY WORLD, HE IS.
CATH
LEVI
BUT BAZ IS HIS *NEMESIS.*
CATH
I DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW THE RULES.
THE ORIGINAL BOOKS ALREADY EXIST—IT'S NOT MY JOB TO REWRITE THEM.
LEVI
IS IT YOUR JOB TO MAKE SIMON GAY?
CATH
YOU'RE GETTING DISTRACTED BY THE GAY THING.
HEH-HEH
WELL, IT *IS* KINDA DISTRACTING...
LEVI

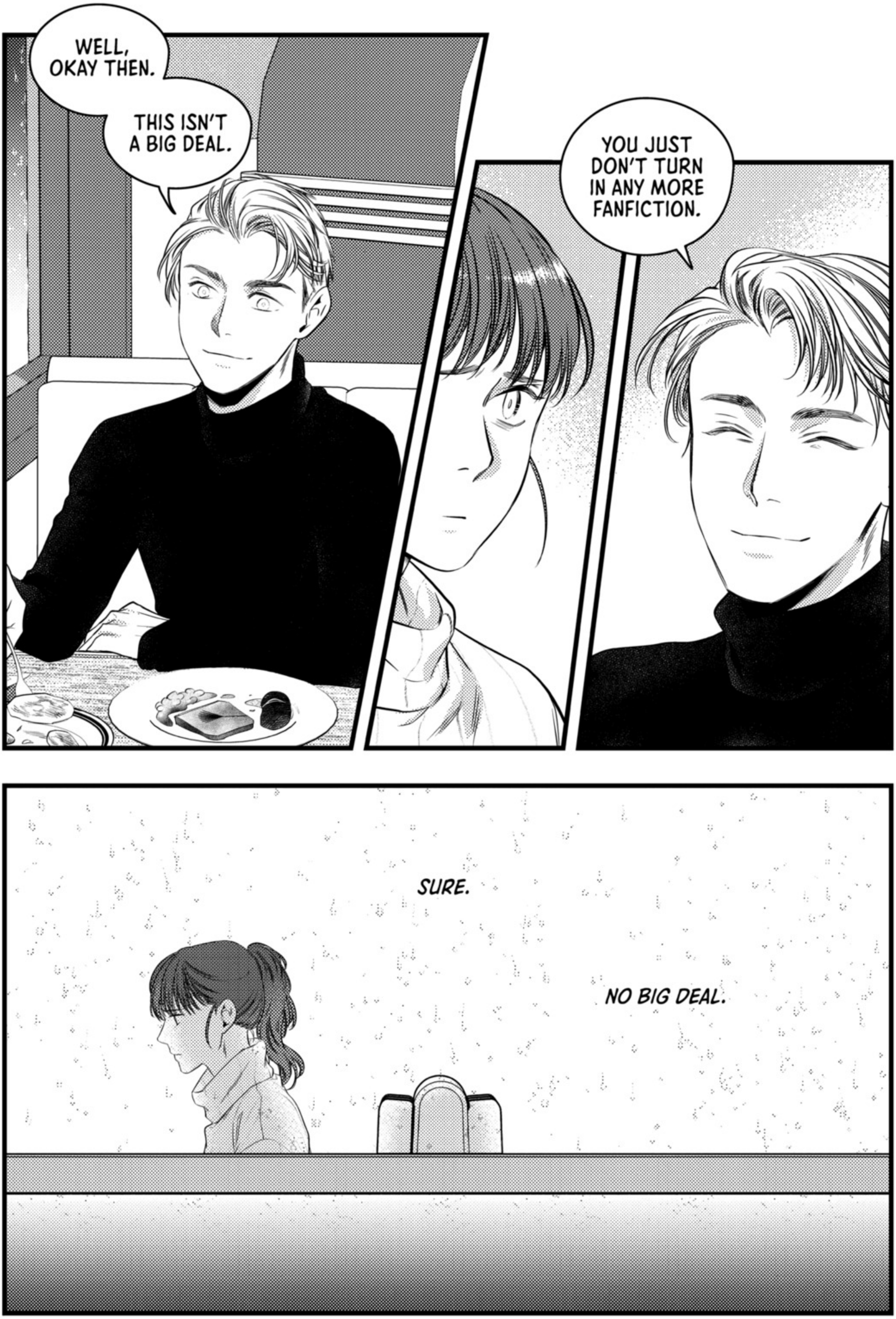

THE WHOLE POINT OF FANFICTION IS THAT YOU GET TO PLAY INSIDE SOMEBODY ELSE'S UNIVERSE.
REWRITE THE RULES.
ATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
OR BEND THEM.
THE STORY DOESN'T HAVE TO END WHEN GEMMA LESLIE GETS TIRED OF IT.
YOU CAN STAY IN THIS WORLD, THE WORLD YOU LOVE, AS LONG AS YOU WANT, AS LONG AS YOU KEEP THINKING OF NEW STORIES–


FANFICTION...
YES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING ALL THIS.
I JUST GET SO EXCITED WHENEVER I GET TO ACTUALLY TALK ABOUT MY FIC.


I'M SO USED TO KEEPING IT A SECRET...
USED TO ASSUMING PEOPLE WILL THINK I'M A FREAK AND A NERD AND A PERVERT...
MAYBE LEVI THINKS ALL THOSE THINGS.
MAYBE HE JUST FINDS FREAKS AND PERVERTS AMUSING.


SO... THE EMERGENCY DANCE PARTY?
SLUMP
RIGHT.
I WROTE A PIECE ABOUT SIMON AND BAZ FOR AN ASSIGNMENT.
MY PROFESSOR DIDN'T GET IT.
SHE THOUGHT IT WAS PLAGIARISM.
BUT IT WAS *YOUR* STORY? YOUR WORDS?
YES.
THAT'S NOT EXACTLY PLAGIARISM...


I MEAN, I GET WHY YOUR PROFESSOR WOULDN'T WANT YOU TURNING IN A SIMON SNOW STORY.
THE CLASS ISN'T CALLED *FAN*FICTION-WRITING.
BUT I WOULDN'T CALL THAT PLAGIARISM.
IS FANFICTION ILLEGAL?
SWF
NO, AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TRY TO SELL IT.
GEMMA T. LESLIE—WHO WRITES THE SIMON SNOW BOOKS—SAYS SHE LOVES FANFICTION.
OR THE *IDEA* OF IT. SHE DOESN'T ACTUALLY *READ* IT.
IS YOUR PROFESSOR REPORTING YOU TO THE JUDICIAL BOARD?
NO—SHE DIDN'T EVEN MENTION THAT!


WELL, OKAY THEN.
THIS ISN'T A BIG DEAL.
YOU JUST DON'T TURN IN ANY MORE FANFICTION.
SURE.
NO BIG DEAL.

From *Simon Snow and the Mage's Heir*

Chapter 5

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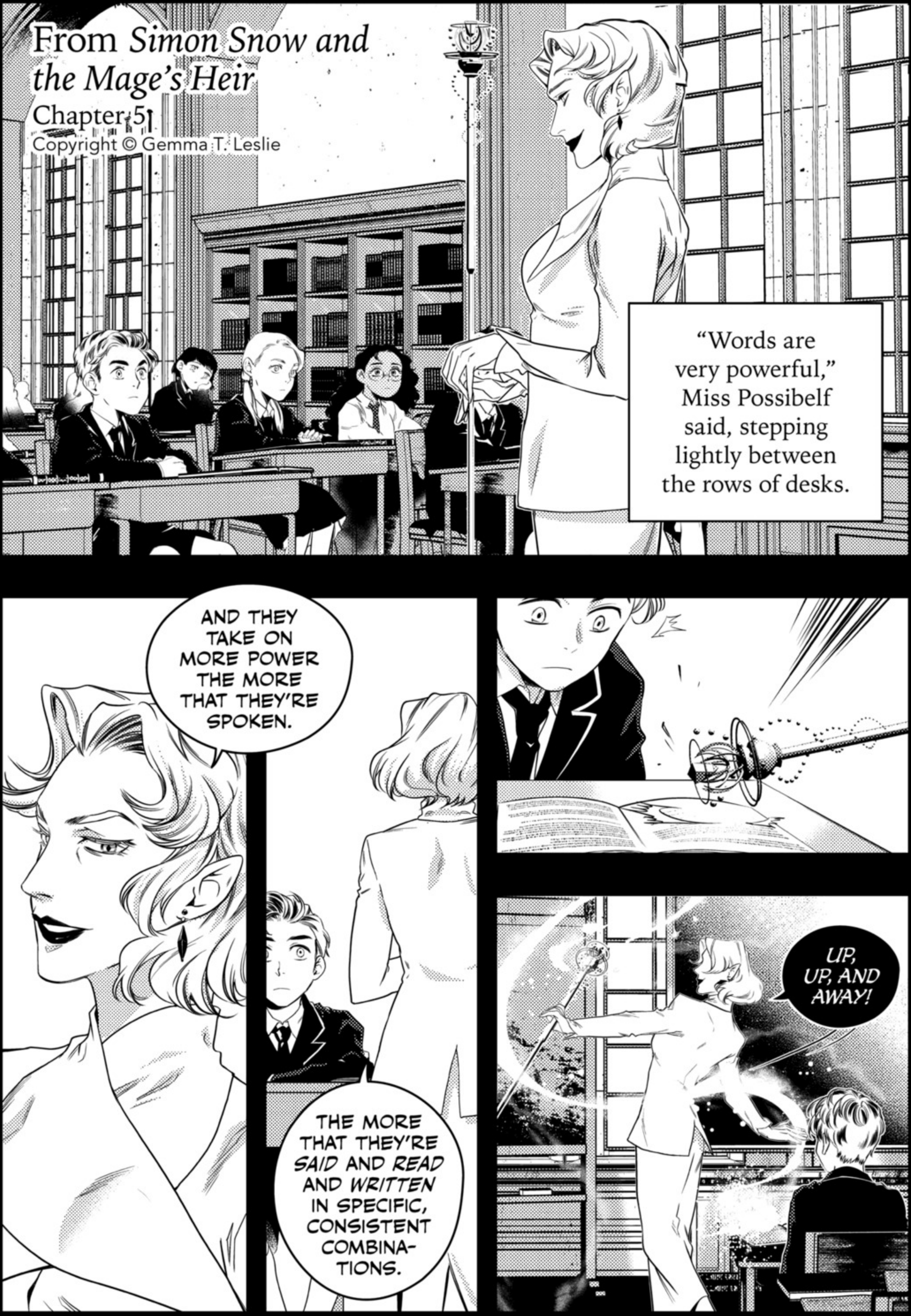
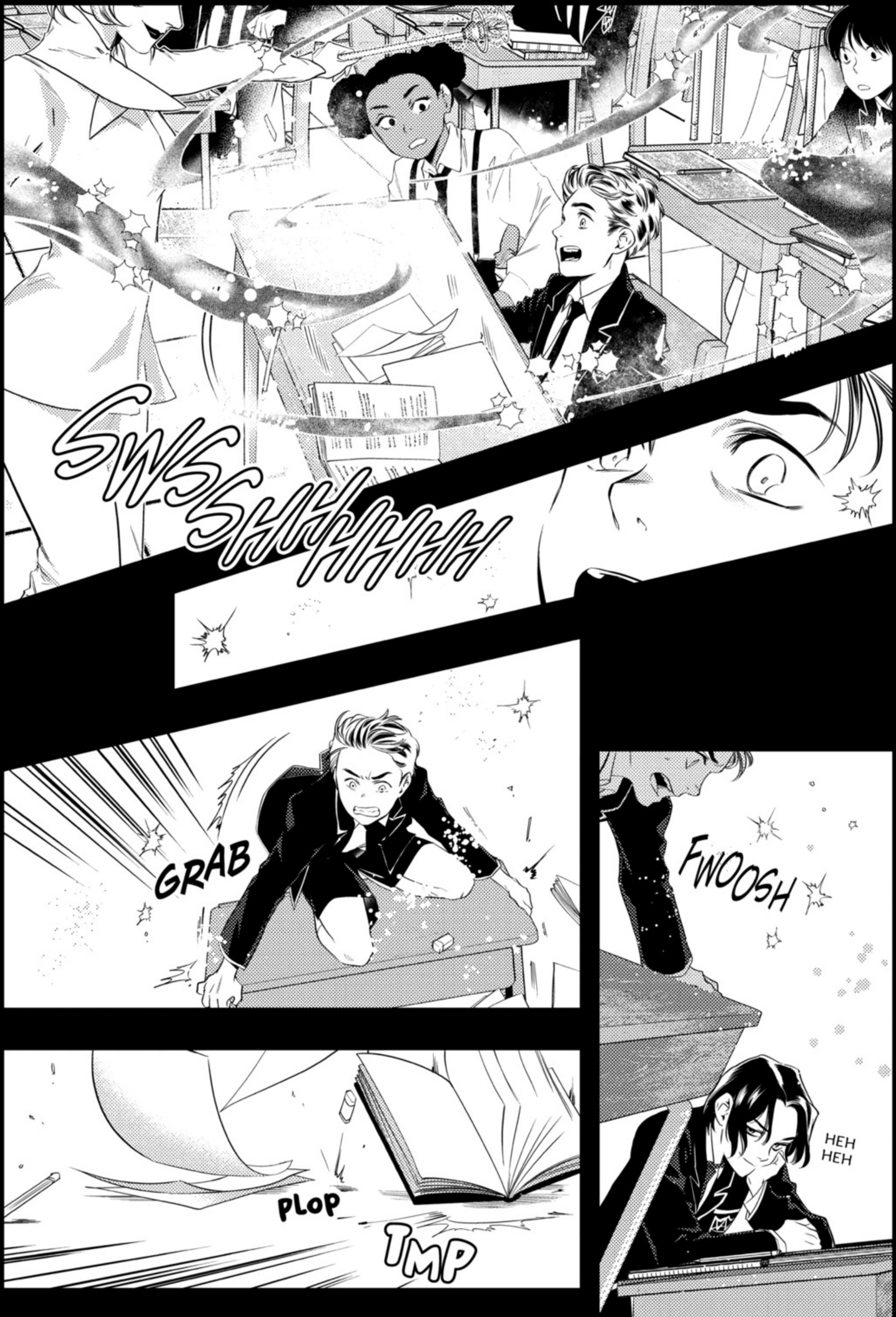
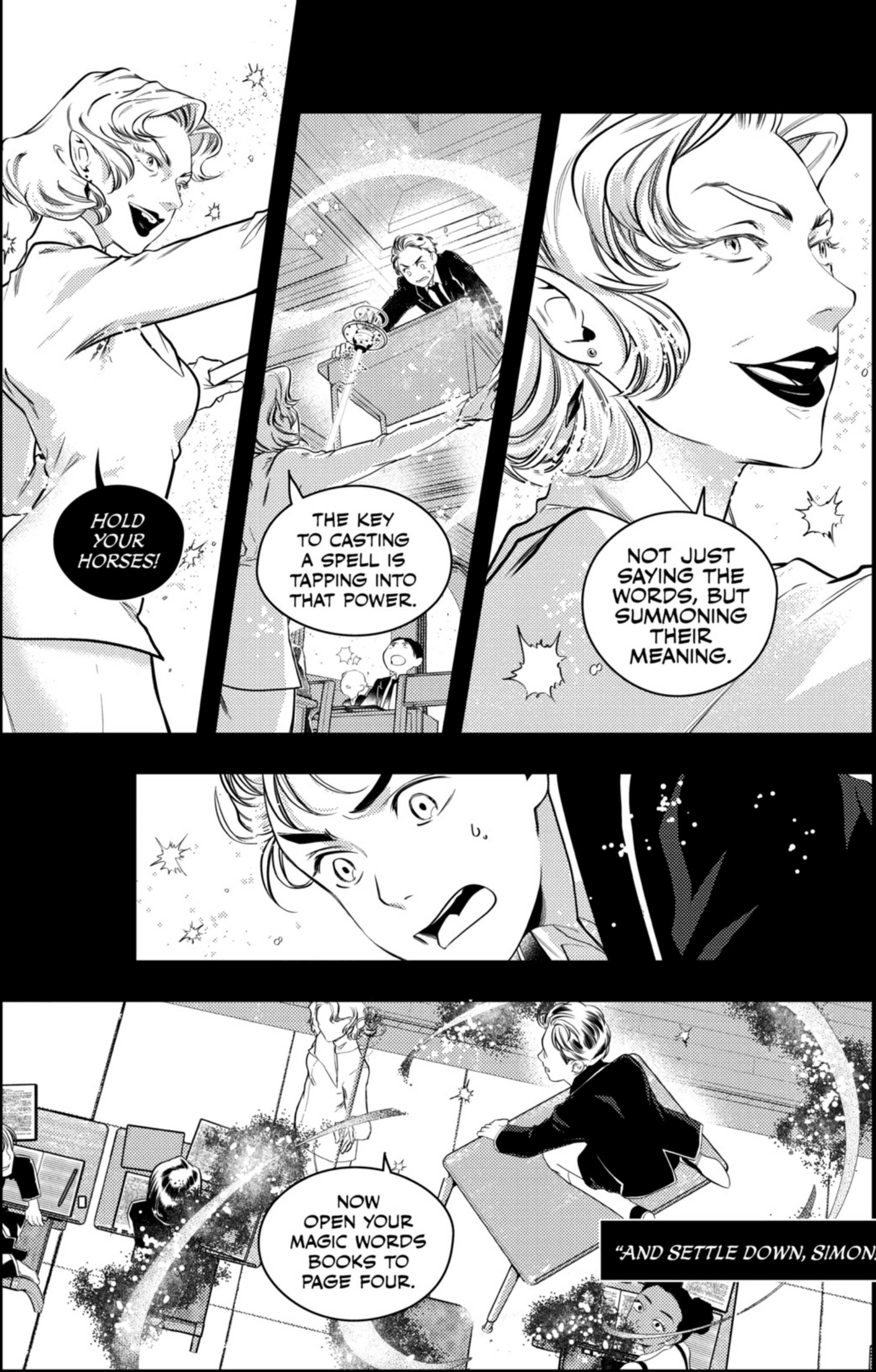
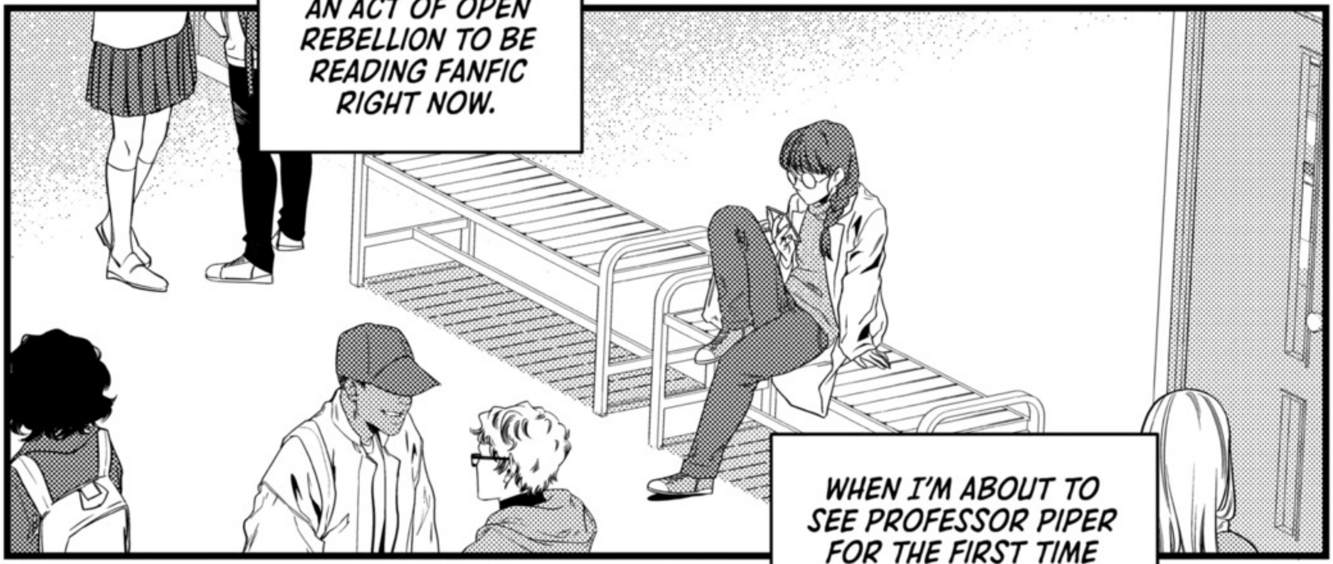
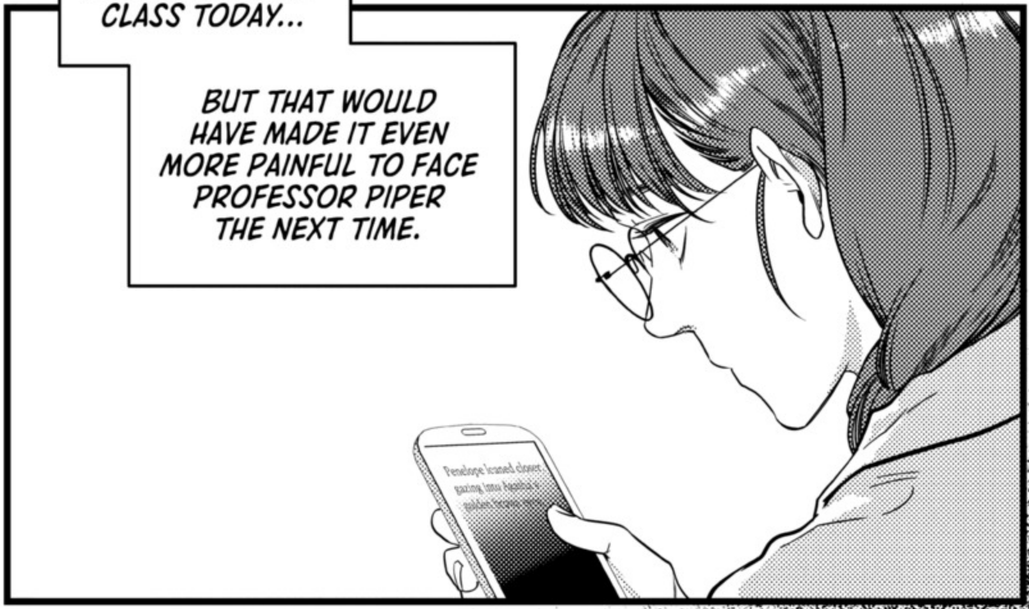
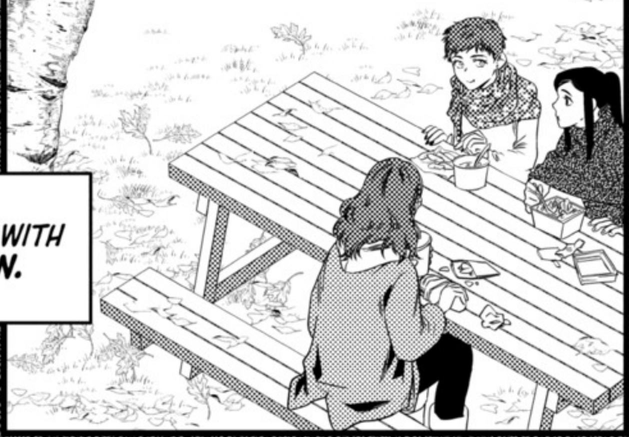

"Words are very powerful," Miss Possibelf said, stepping lightly between the rows of desks.
AND THEY TAKE ON MORE POWER THE MORE THAT THEY'RE SPOKEN.
THE MORE THAT THEY'RE *SAID* AND *READ* AND *WRITTEN* IN SPECIFIC, CONSISTENT COMBINATIONS.
UP, UP, AND AWAY!

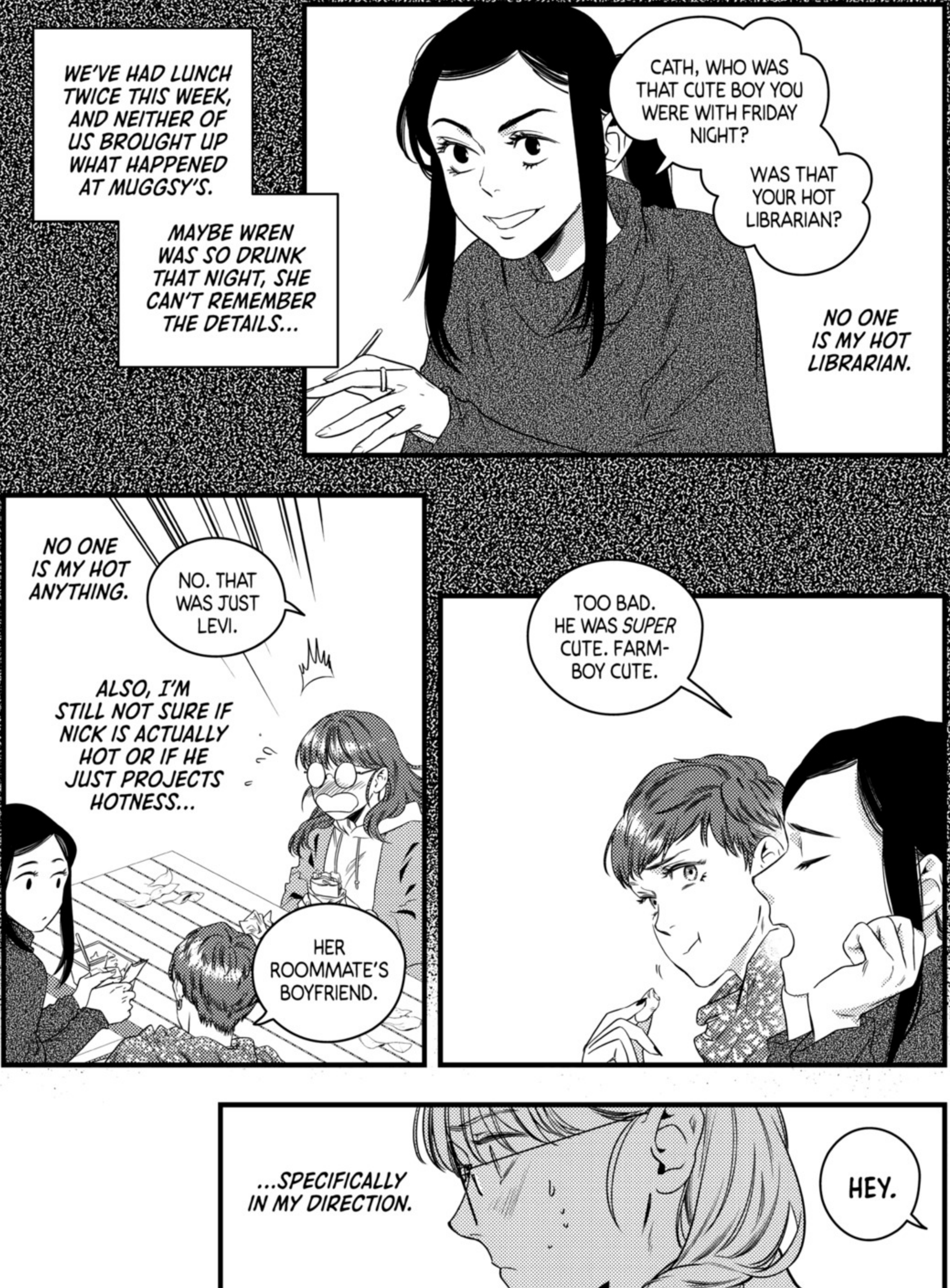

SWSSHHHHHH
FWOOSH
HEH HEH
GRAB
PLOP
TMP

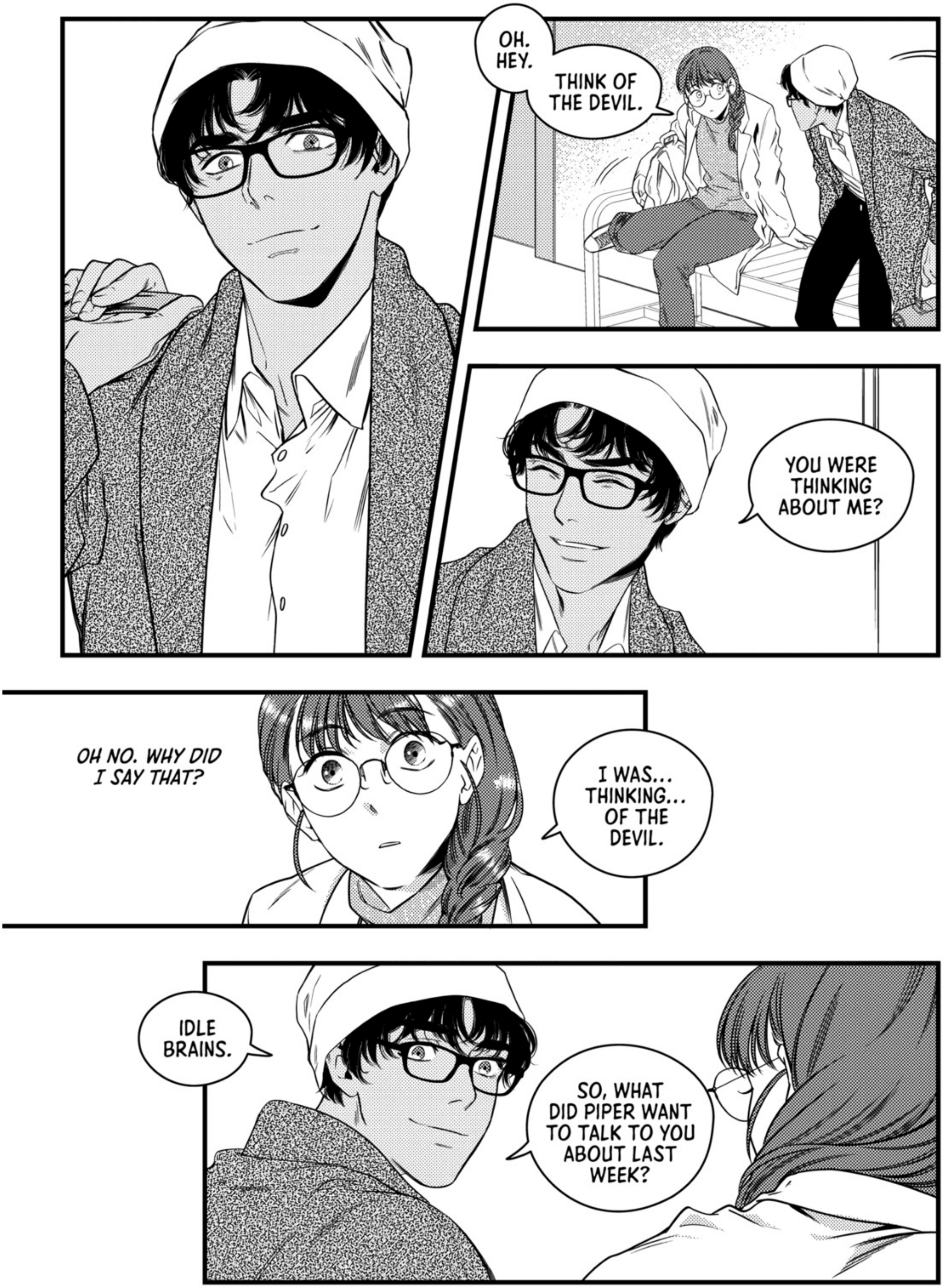

HOLD YOUR HORSES!
THE KEY TO CASTING A SPELL IS TAPPING INTO THAT POWER.
NOT JUST SAYING THE WORDS, BUT SUMMONING THEIR MEANING.
NOW OPEN YOUR MAGIC WORDS BOOKS TO PAGE FOUR.
"AND SETTLE DOWN, SIMON!"

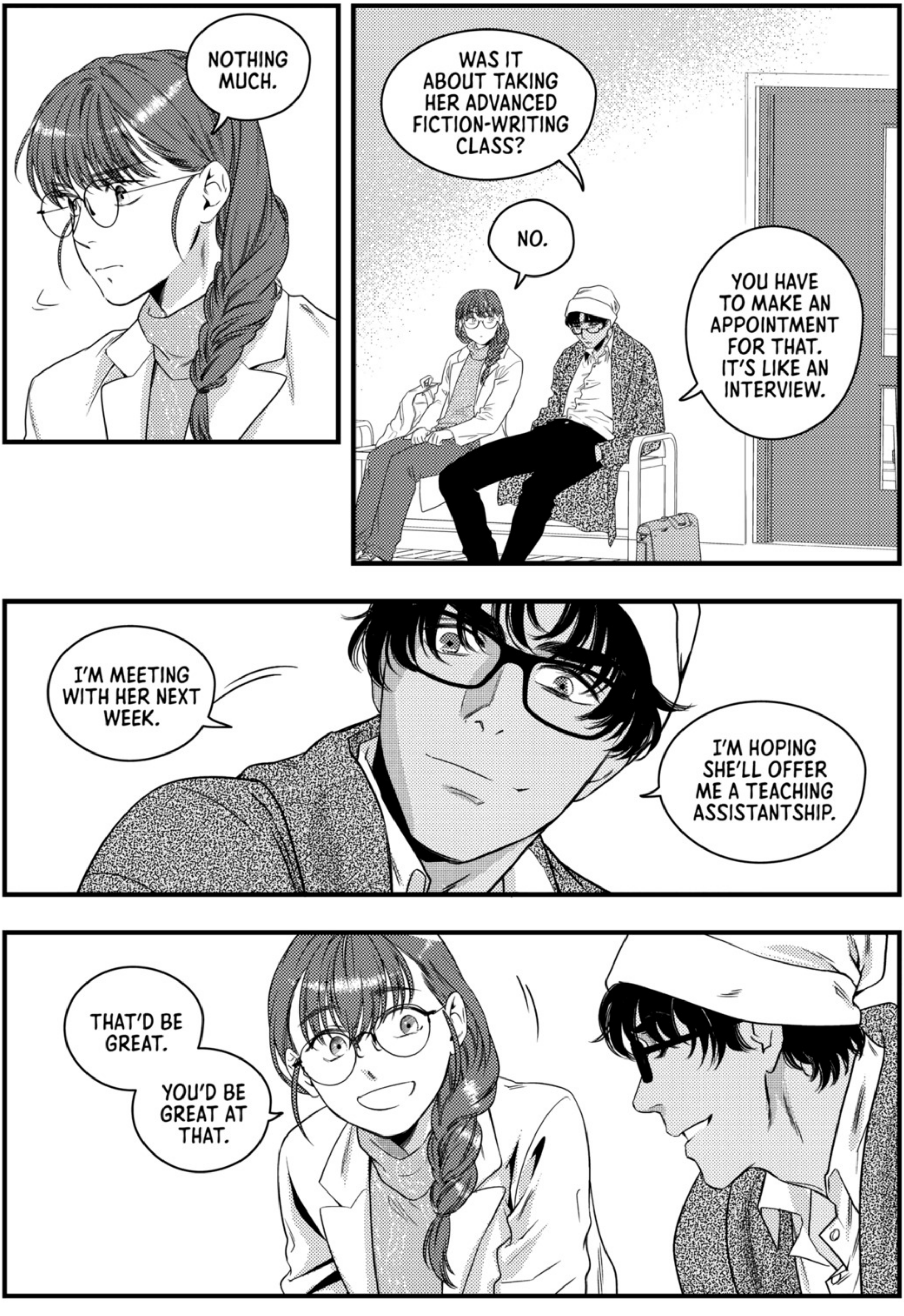

IT FEELS LIKE AN ACT OF OPEN REBELLION TO BE READING FANFIC RIGHT NOW.
WHEN I'M ABOUT TO SEE PROFESSOR PIPER FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE OUR TALK.

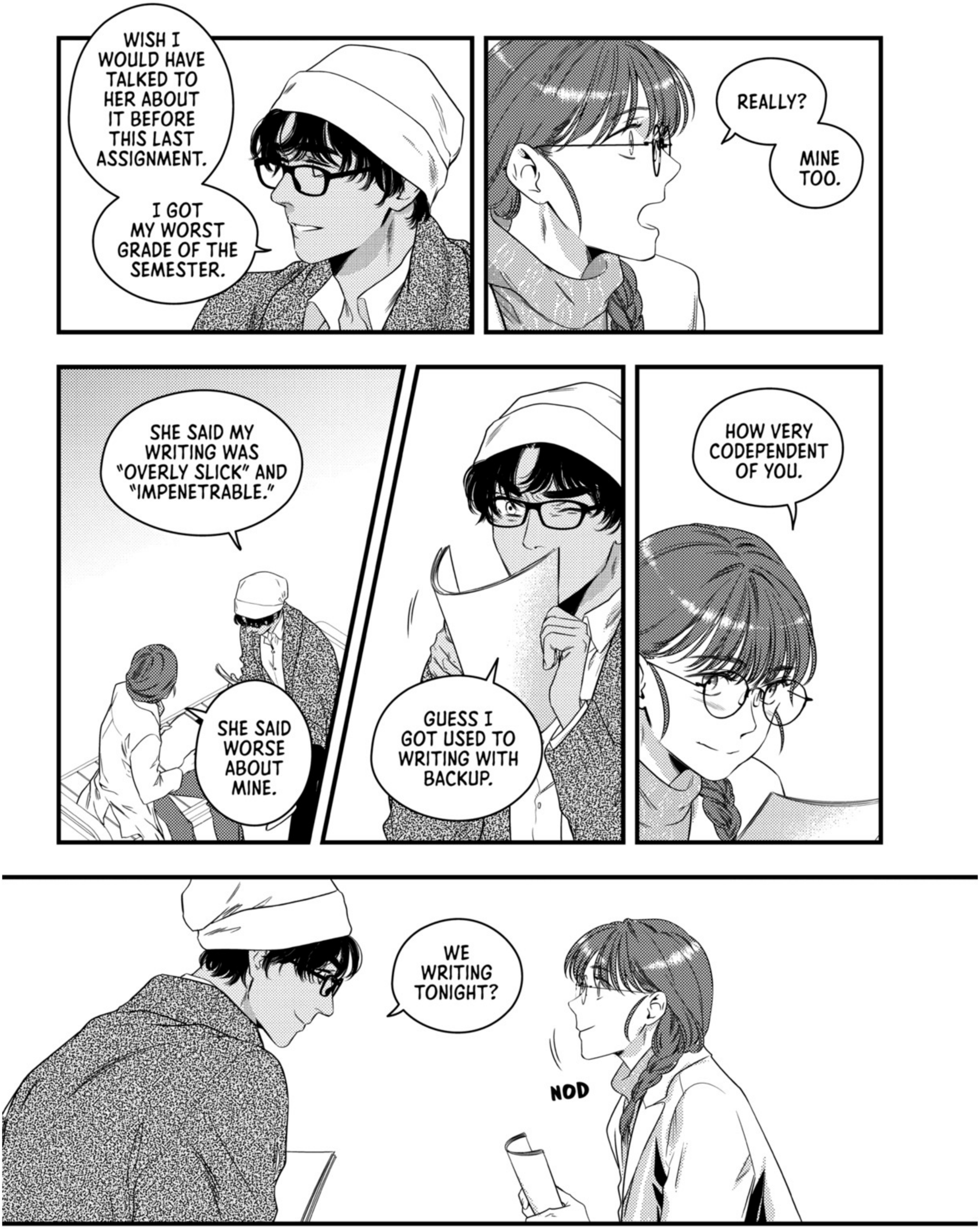

I THOUGHT ABOUT SKIPPING CLASS TODAY...
BUT THAT WOULD HAVE MADE IT EVEN MORE PAINFUL TO FACE PROFESSOR PIPER THE NEXT TIME.


BETTER TO JUST GET IT OVER WITH...
...LIKE WITH **WREN.**


WE'VE HAD LUNCH TWICE THIS WEEK, AND NEITHER OF US BROUGHT UP WHAT HAPPENED AT MUGGSY'S.
MAYBE WREN WAS SO DRUNK THAT NIGHT, SHE CAN'T REMEMBER THE DETAILS...
CATH, WHO WAS THAT CUTE BOY YOU WERE WITH FRIDAY NIGHT?
WAS THAT YOUR HOT LIBRARIAN?
NO ONE IS MY HOT LIBRARIAN.
NO ONE IS MY HOT ANYTHING.
NO. THAT WAS JUST LEVI.
ALSO, I'M STILL NOT SURE IF NICK IS ACTUALLY HOT OR IF HE JUST PROJECTS HOTNESS...
HER ROOMMATE'S BOYFRIEND.
TOO BAD. HE WAS *SUPER* CUTE. FARM-BOY CUTE.
...SPECIFICALLY IN MY DIRECTION.
HEY.


OH. HEY.
THINK OF THE DEVIL.
YOU WERE THINKING ABOUT ME?
OH NO. WHY DID I SAY THAT?
I WAS... THINKING... OF THE DEVIL.
IDLE BRAINS.
SO, WHAT DID PIPER WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT LAST WEEK?


NOTHING MUCH.
WAS IT ABOUT TAKING HER ADVANCED FICTION-WRITING CLASS?
NO.
YOU HAVE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR THAT. IT'S LIKE AN INTERVIEW.
I'M MEETING WITH HER NEXT WEEK.
I'M HOPING SHE'LL OFFER ME A TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP.
THAT'D BE GREAT.
YOU'D BE GREAT AT THAT.


WISH I WOULD HAVE TALKED TO HER ABOUT IT BEFORE THIS LAST ASSIGNMENT.
I GOT MY WORST GRADE OF THE SEMESTER.
REALLY?
MINE TOO.
SHE SAID MY WRITING WAS "OVERLY SLICK" AND "IMPENETRABLE."
SHE SAID WORSE ABOUT MINE.
GUESS I GOT USED TO WRITING WITH BACKUP.
HOW VERY CODEPENDENT OF YOU.
WE WRITING TONIGHT?
NOD

From *Simon Snow and the Six White Hares*

Chapter 3

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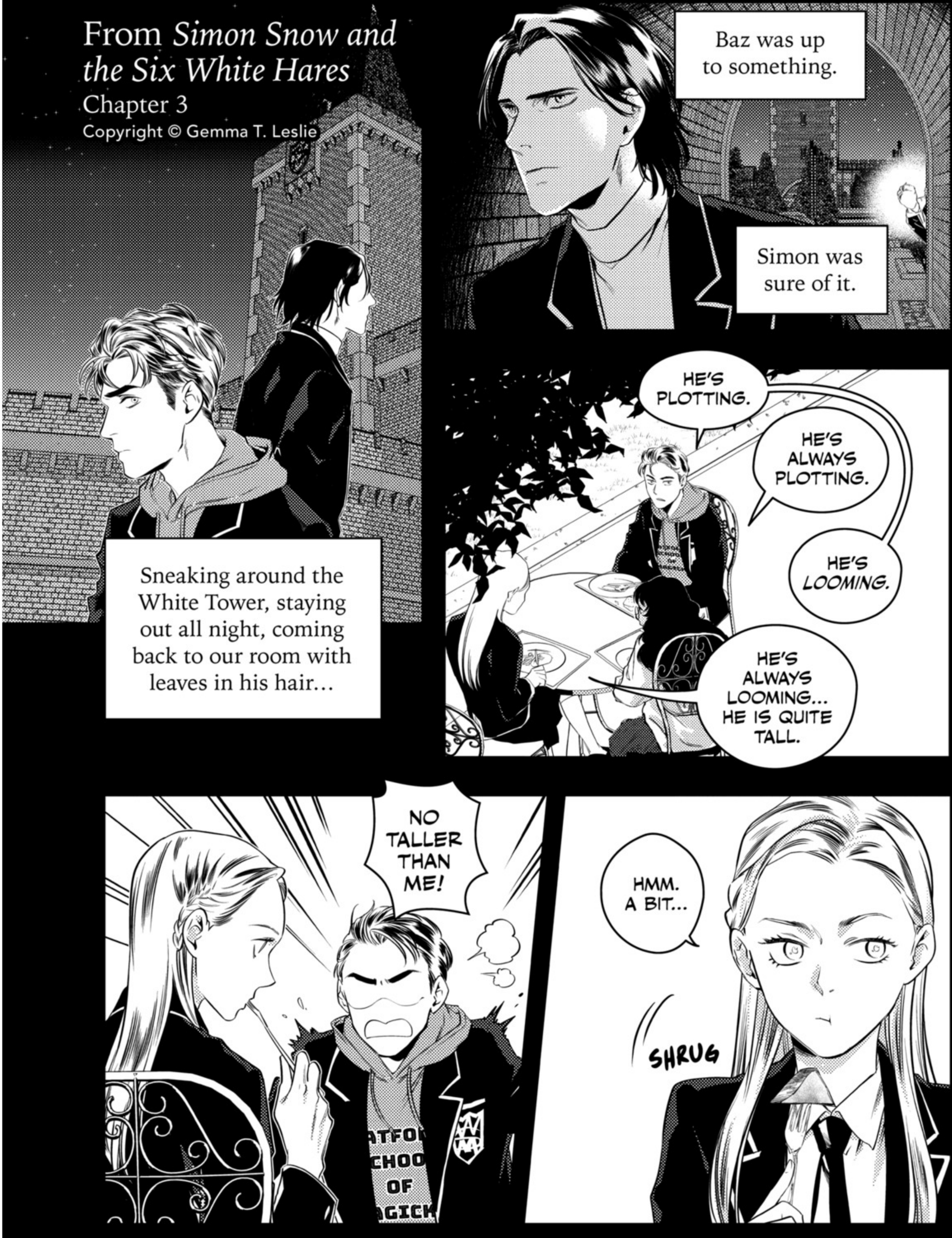
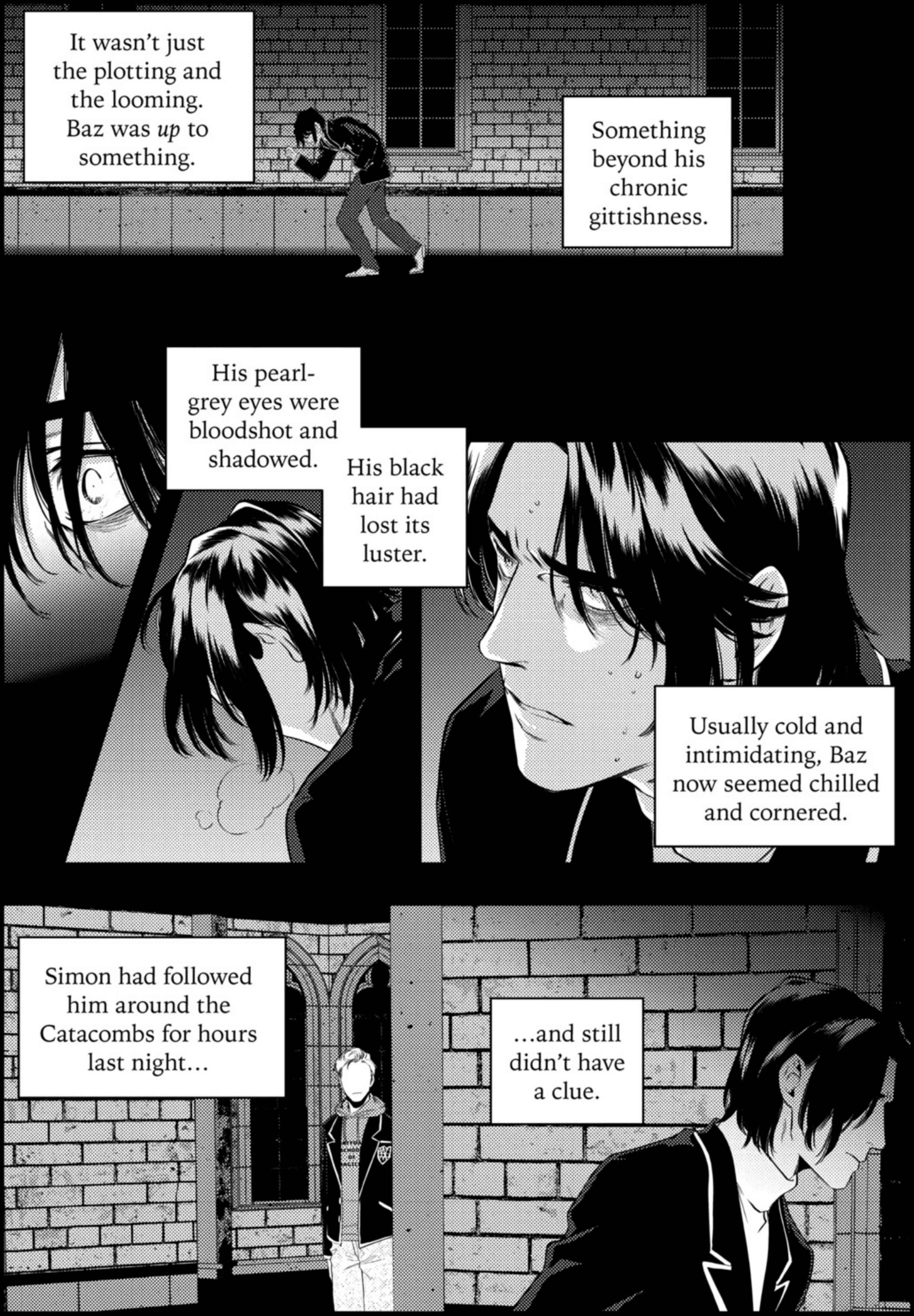
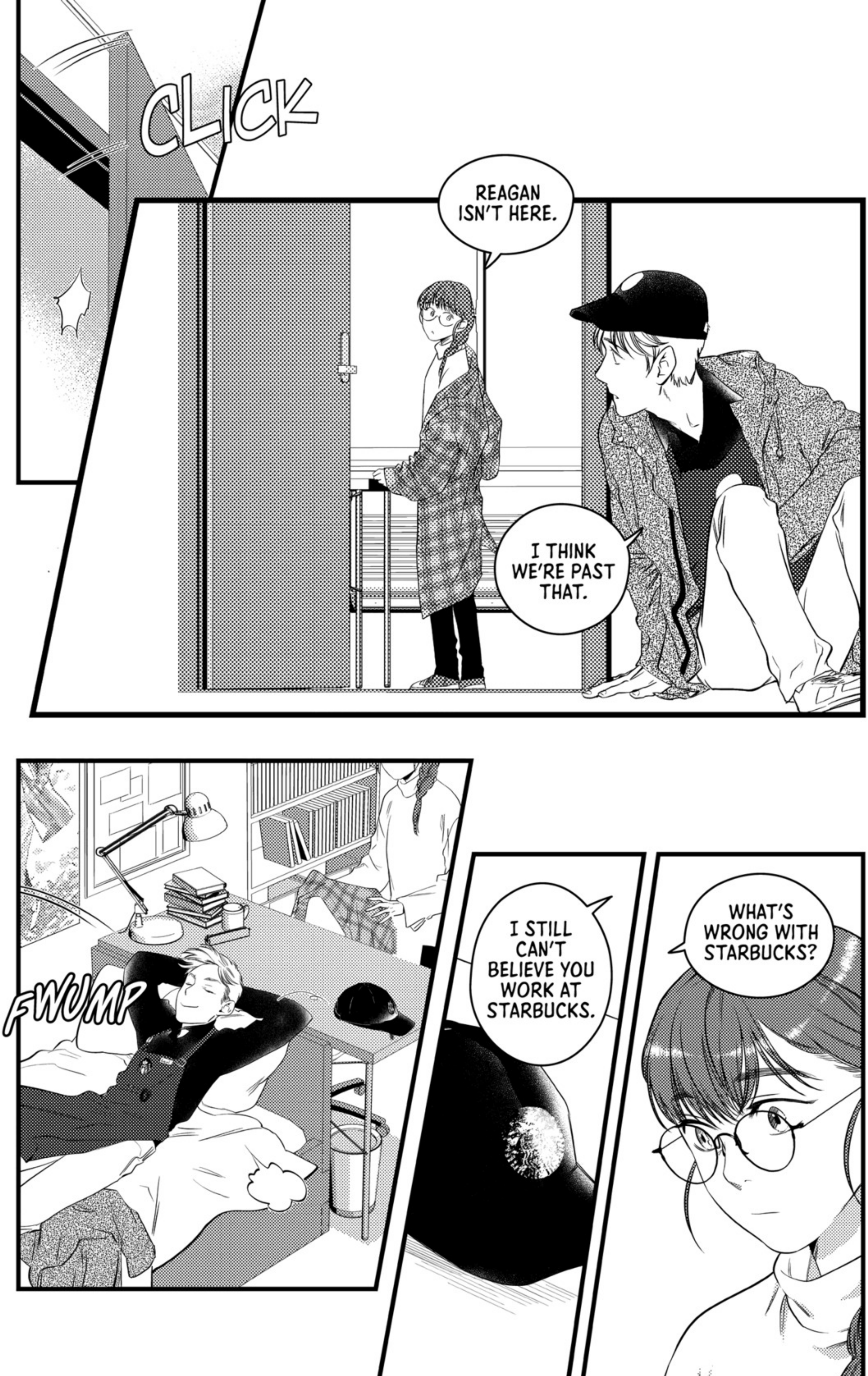
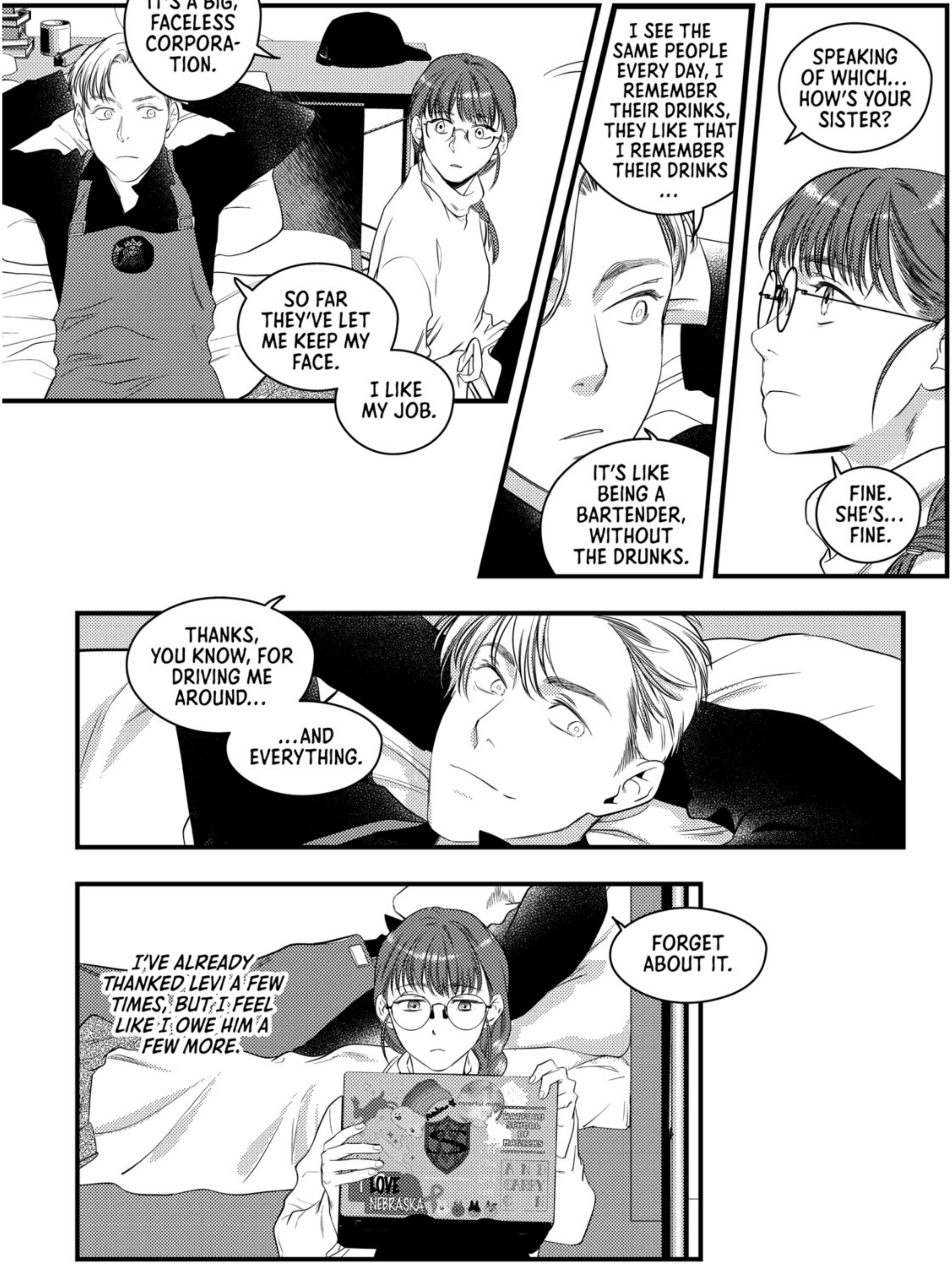
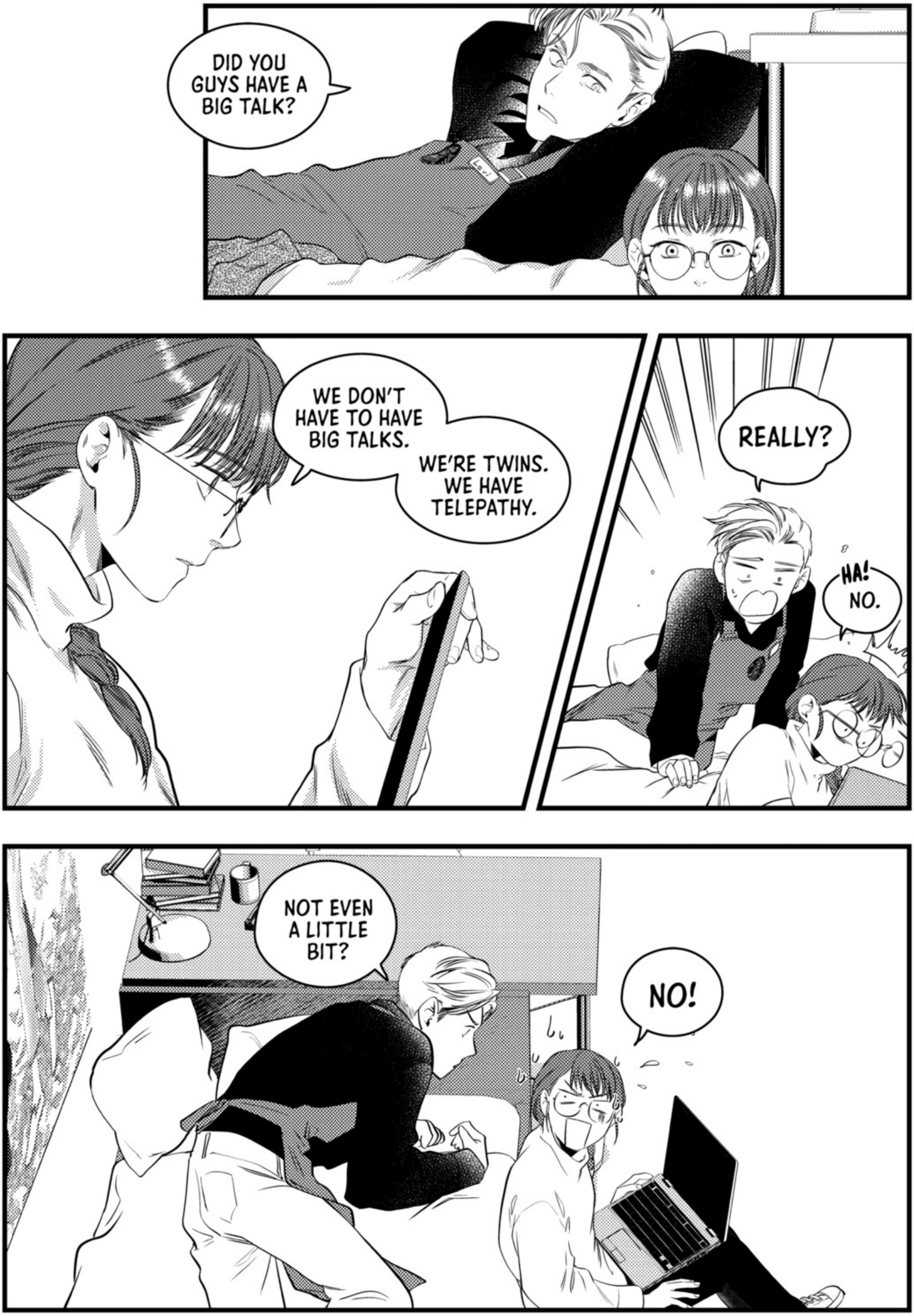
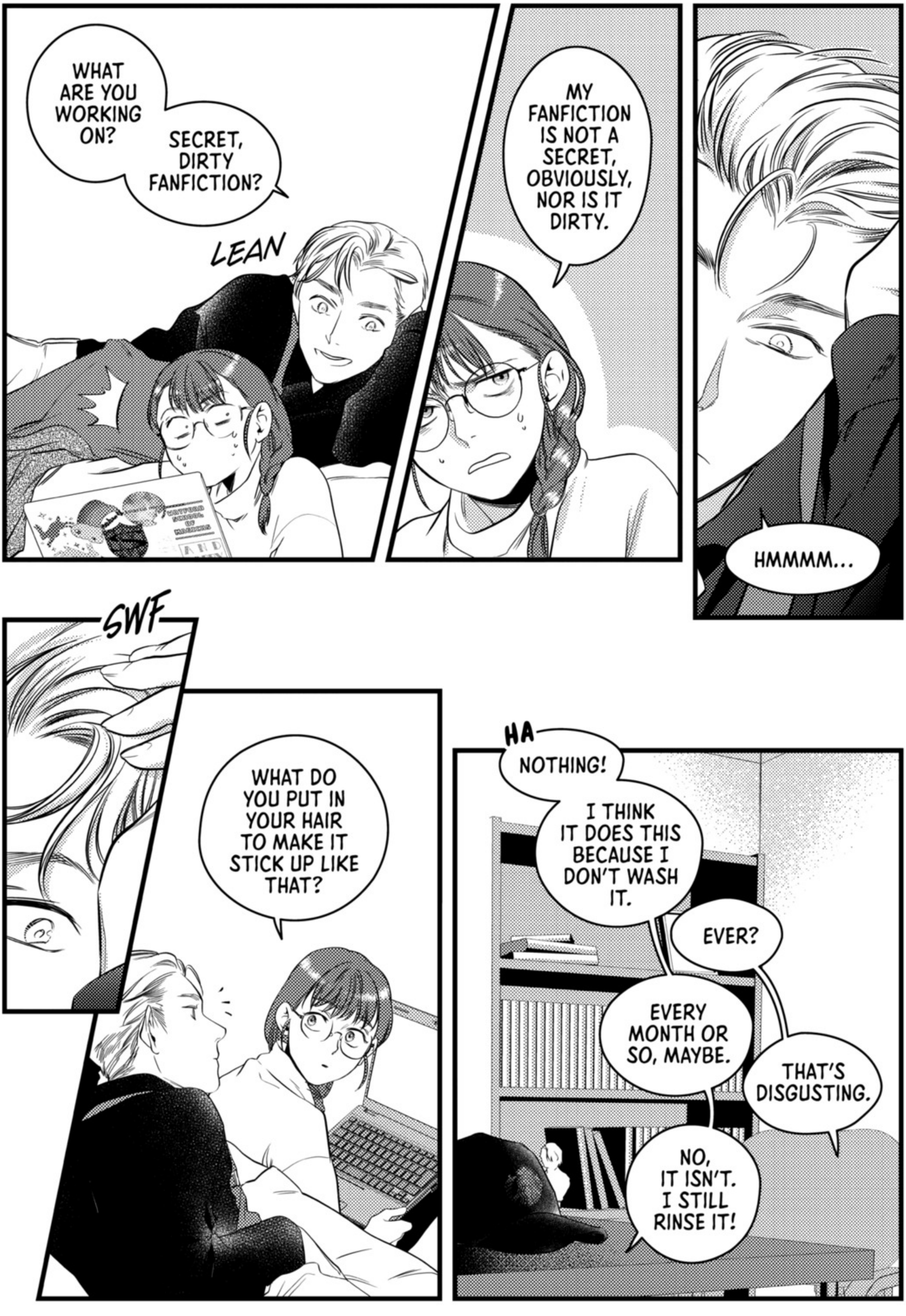

Baz was up to something.
Simon was sure of it.
Sneaking around the White Tower, staying out all night, coming back to our room with leaves in his hair…
HE'S PLOTTING.
HE'S ALWAYS PLOTTING.
HE'S *LOOMING.*
HE'S ALWAYS LOOMING… HE IS QUITE TALL.
NO TALLER THAN ME!
HMM. A BIT…
SHRUG

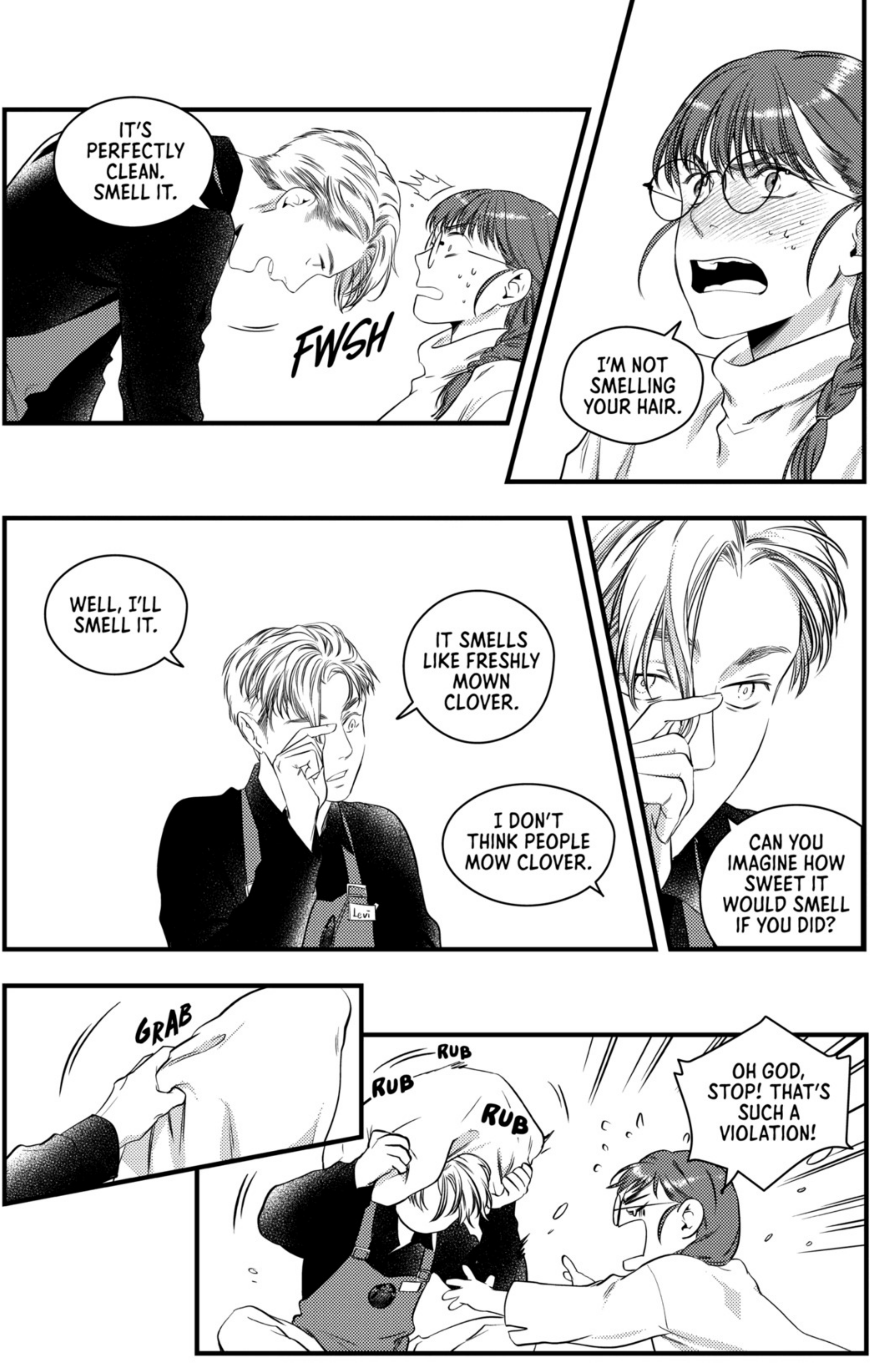

It wasn't just the plotting and the looming. Baz was *up* to something.
Something beyond his chronic gittishness.
His pearl-grey eyes were bloodshot and shadowed.
His black hair had lost its luster.
Usually cold and intimidating, Baz now seemed chilled and cornered.
Simon had followed him around the Catacombs for hours last night…
…and still didn't have a clue.

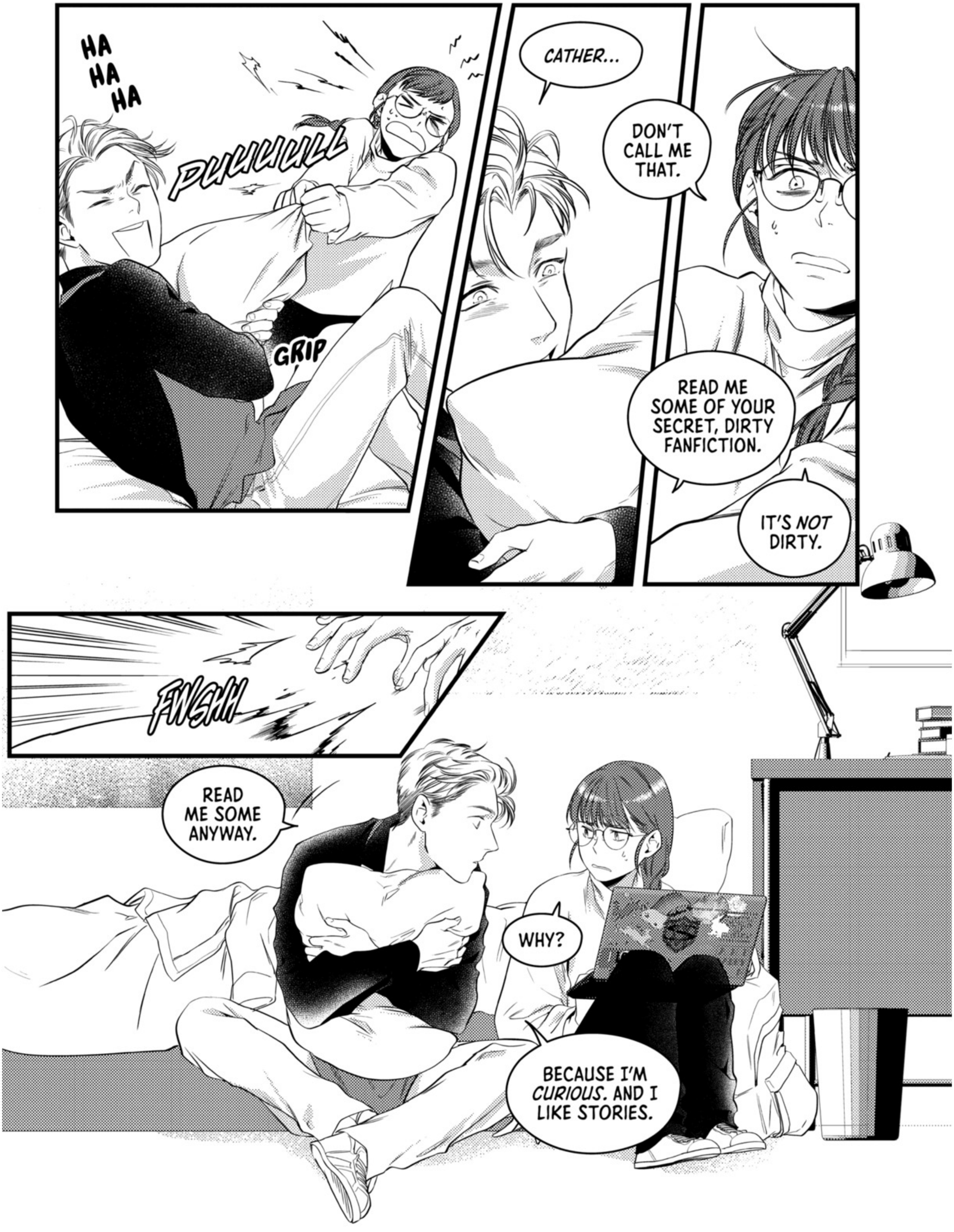

CLICK
REAGAN ISN'T HERE.
I THINK WE'RE PAST THAT.
FWUMP
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WORK AT STARBUCKS.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH STARBUCKS?

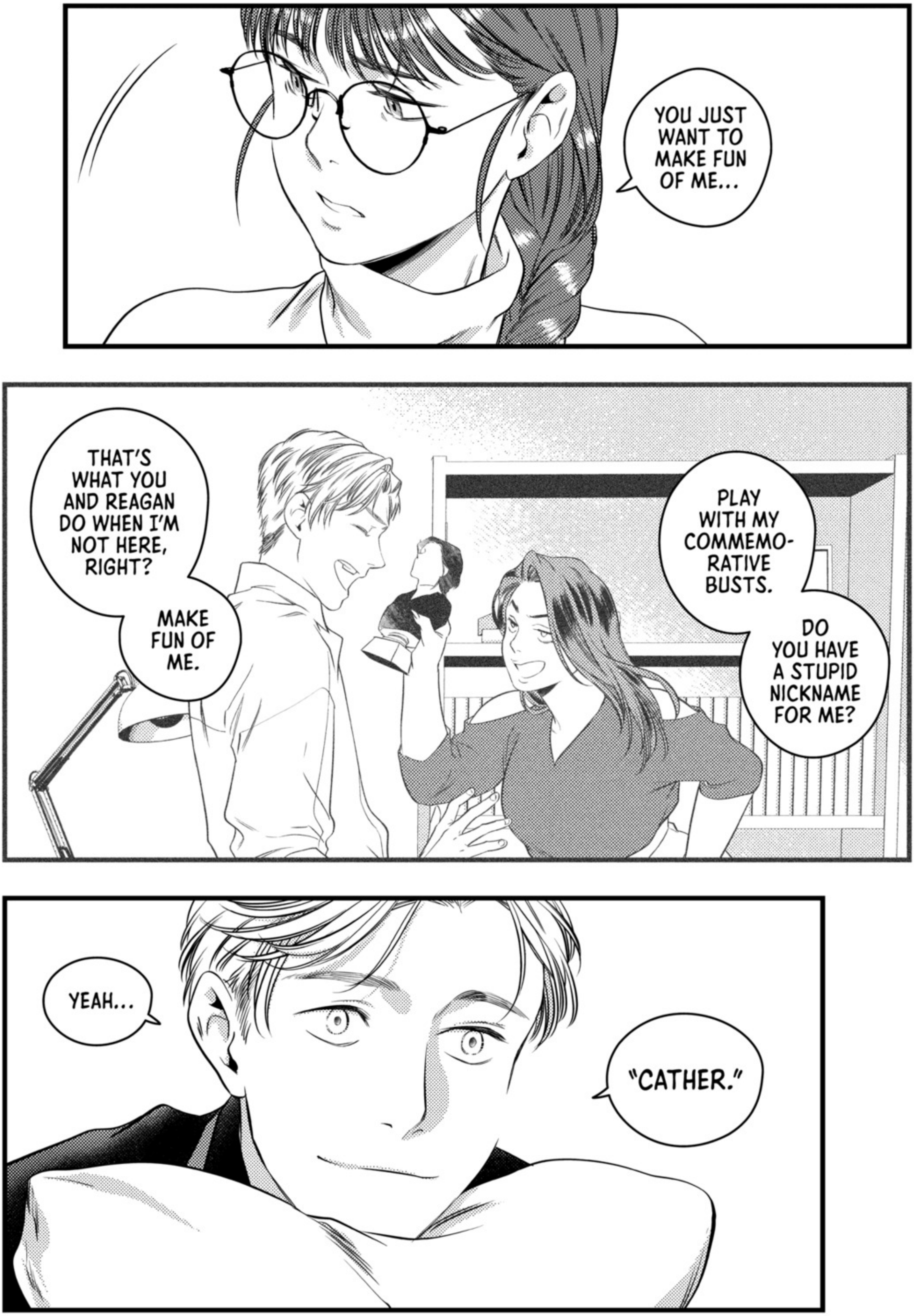

IT'S A BIG, FACELESS CORPORATION.
SO FAR THEY'VE LET ME KEEP MY FACE.
I LIKE MY JOB.
I SEE THE SAME PEOPLE EVERY DAY, I REMEMBER THEIR DRINKS, THEY LIKE THAT I REMEMBER THEIR DRINKS ...
IT'S LIKE BEING A BARTENDER, WITHOUT THE DRUNKS.
SPEAKING OF WHICH... HOW'S YOUR SISTER?
FINE. SHE'S... FINE.
THANKS, YOU KNOW, FOR DRIVING ME AROUND...
...AND EVERYTHING.
I'VE ALREADY THANKED LEVI A FEW TIMES, BUT I FEEL LIKE I OWE HIM A FEW MORE.
FORGET ABOUT IT.
HAWFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
I LOVE NEBRASKA

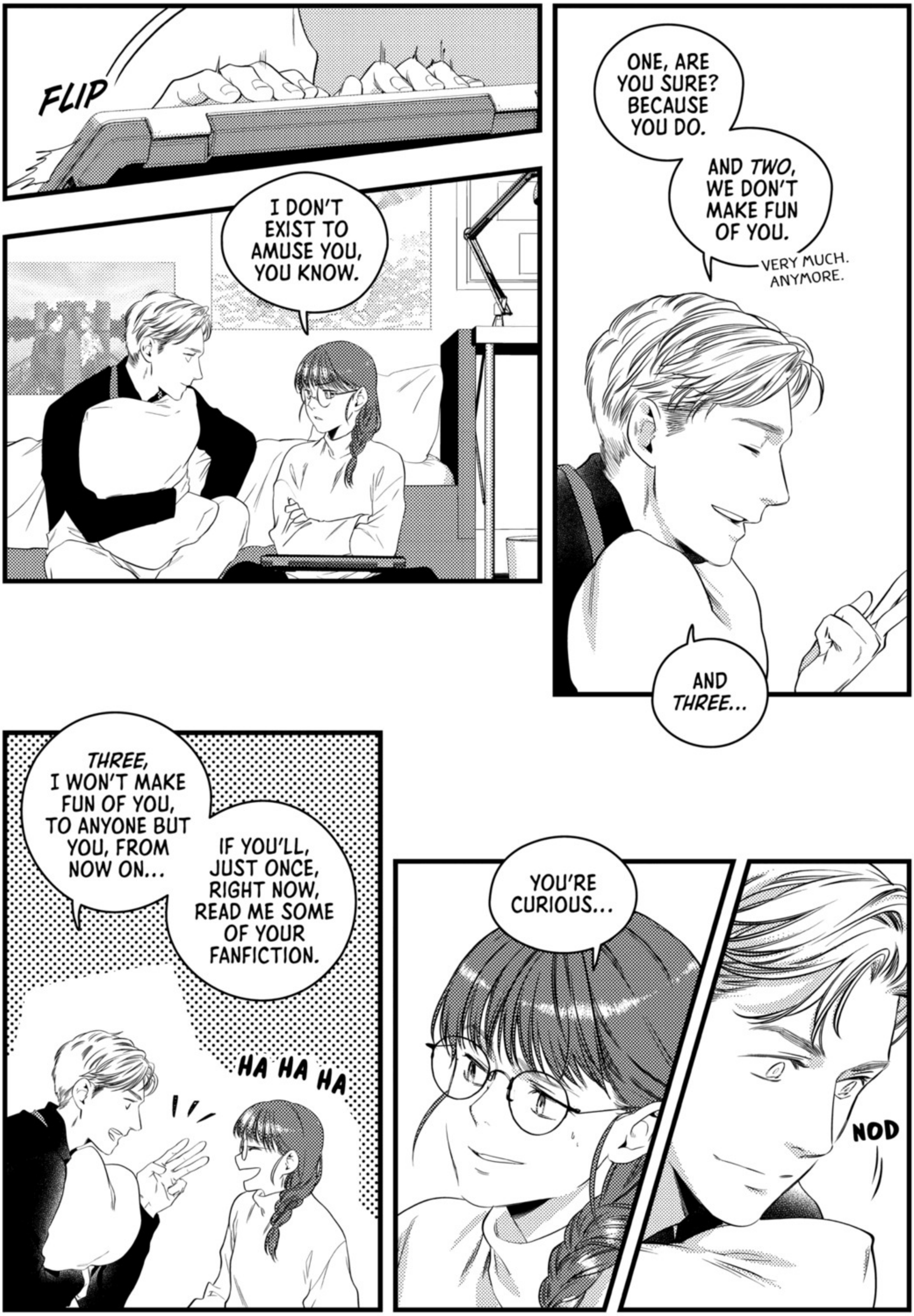

DID YOU GUYS HAVE A BIG TALK?
WE DON'T HAVE TO HAVE BIG TALKS.
WE'RE TWINS. WE HAVE TELEPATHY.
REALLY?
HA! NO.
NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT?
NO!

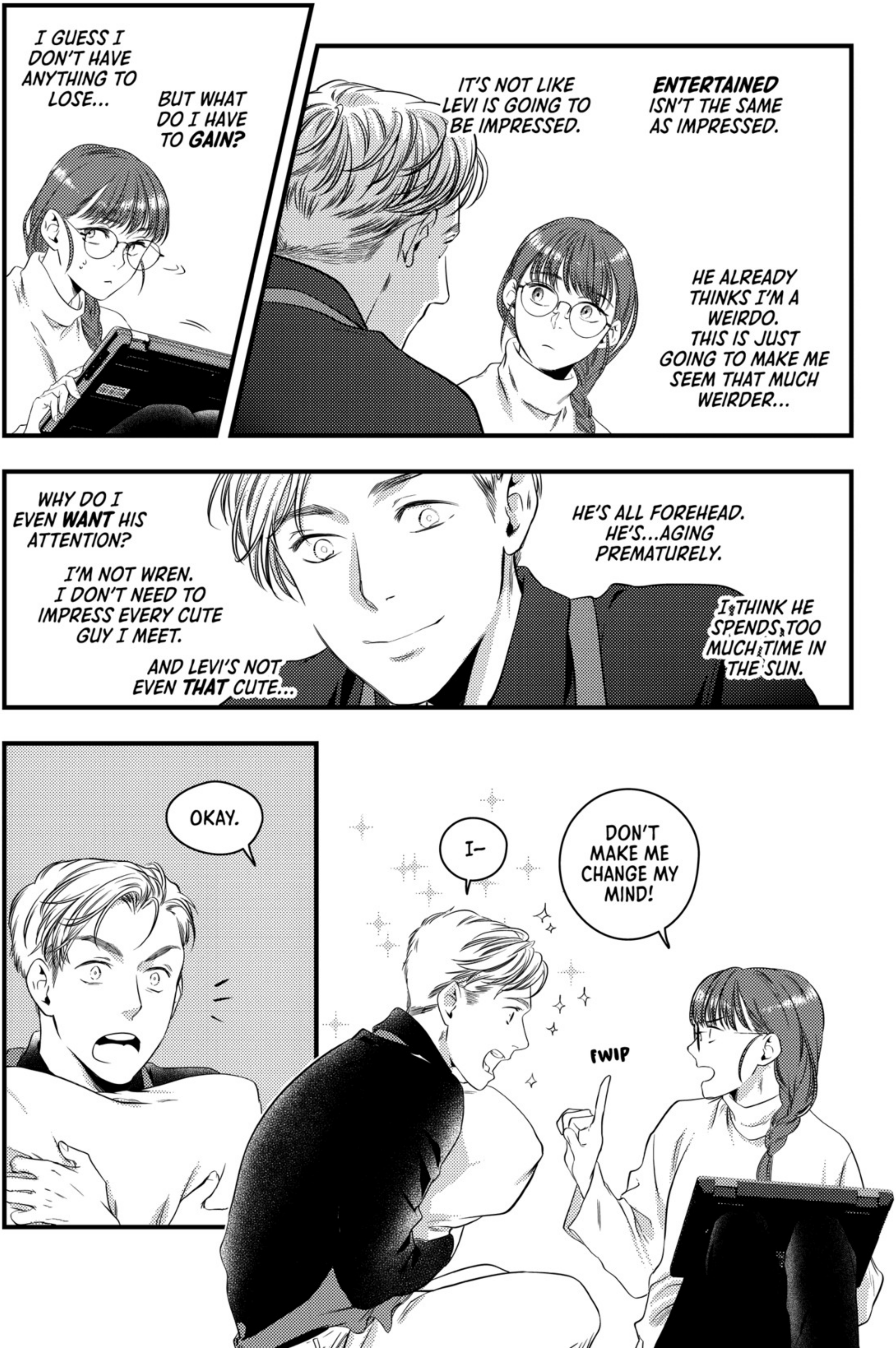

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?
SECRET, DIRTY FANFICTION?
LEAN
MY FANFICTION IS NOT A SECRET, OBVIOUSLY, NOR IS IT DIRTY.
HMMMM...
SWF
WHAT DO YOU PUT IN YOUR HAIR TO MAKE IT STICK UP LIKE THAT?
HA
NOTHING!
I THINK IT DOES THIS BECAUSE I DON'T WASH IT.
EVER?
EVERY MONTH OR SO, MAYBE.
THAT'S DISGUSTING.
NO, IT ISN'T. I STILL RINSE IT!

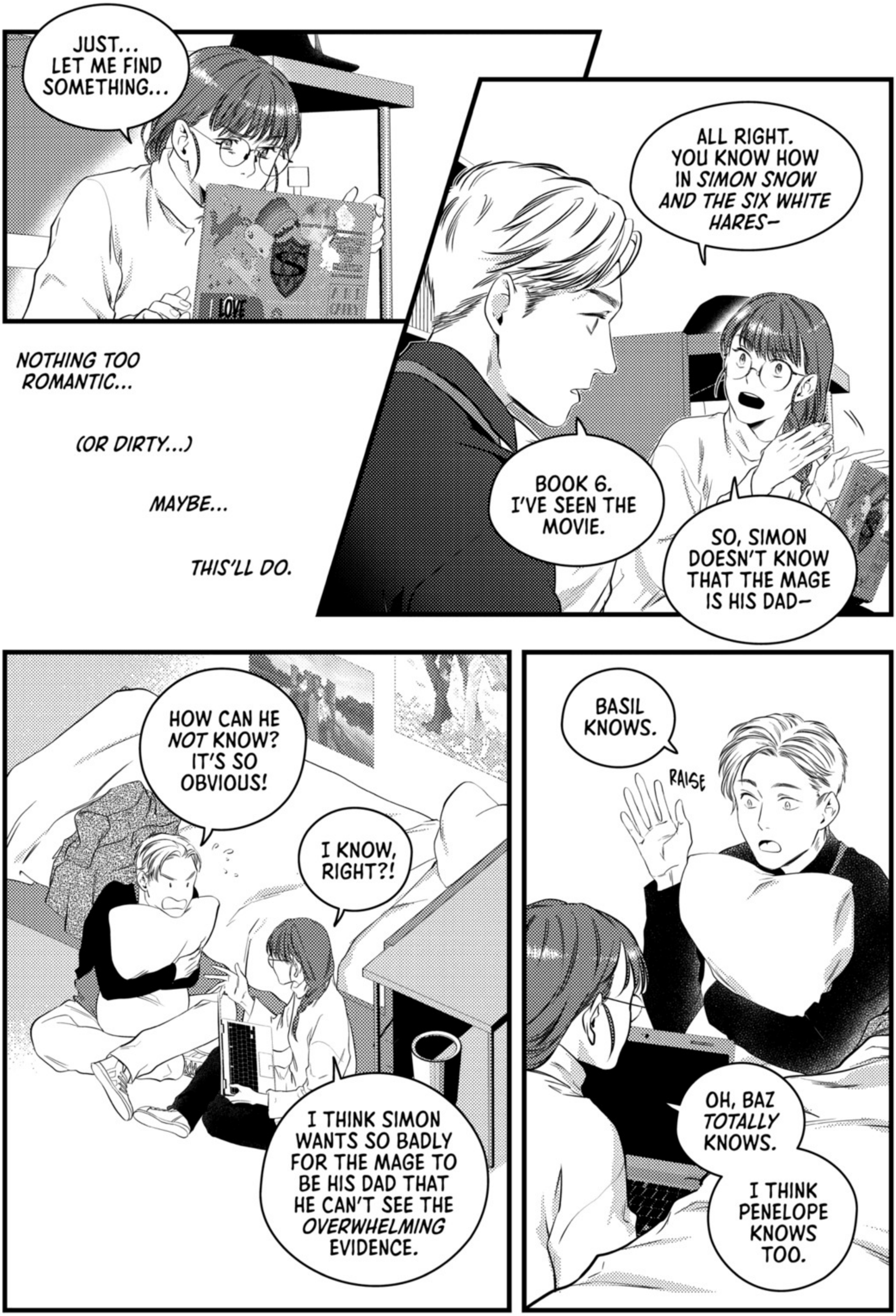

IT'S PERFECTLY CLEAN. SMELL IT.
FWSH
I'M NOT SMELLING YOUR HAIR.
WELL, I'LL SMELL IT.
IT SMELLS LIKE FRESHLY MOWN CLOVER.
Levi
I DON'T THINK PEOPLE MOW CLOVER.
CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW SWEET IT WOULD SMELL IF YOU DID?
GRAB
RUB
RUB
RUB
OH GOD, STOP! THAT'S SUCH A VIOLATION!

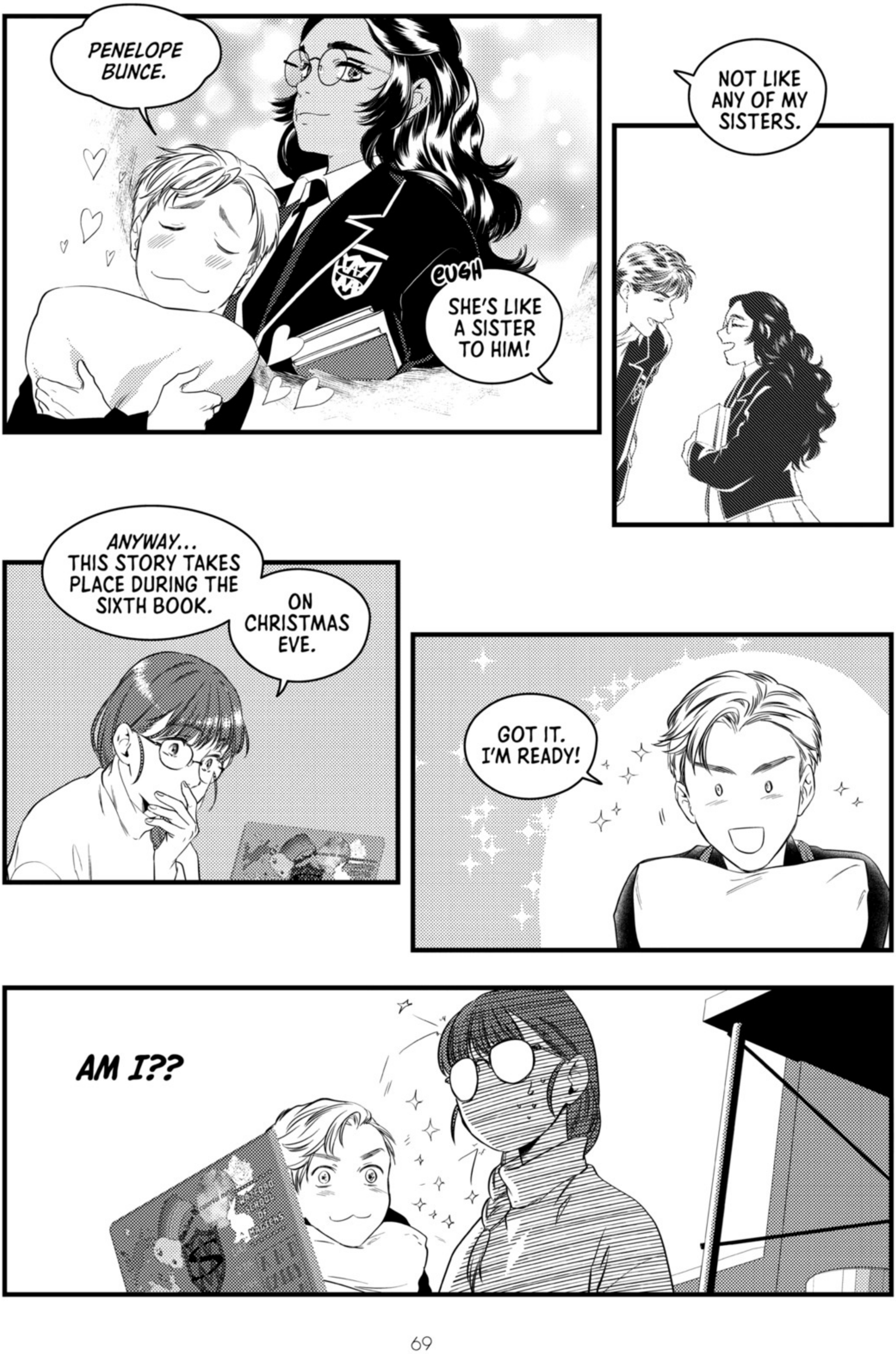

HA
HA
HA
PUUUULL
GRIP
CATHER...
DON'T CALL ME THAT.
READ ME SOME OF YOUR SECRET, DIRTY FANFICTION.
IT'S *NOT* DIRTY.
FWSHH
READ ME SOME ANYWAY.
WHY?
BECAUSE I'M *CURIOUS*. AND I LIKE STORIES.

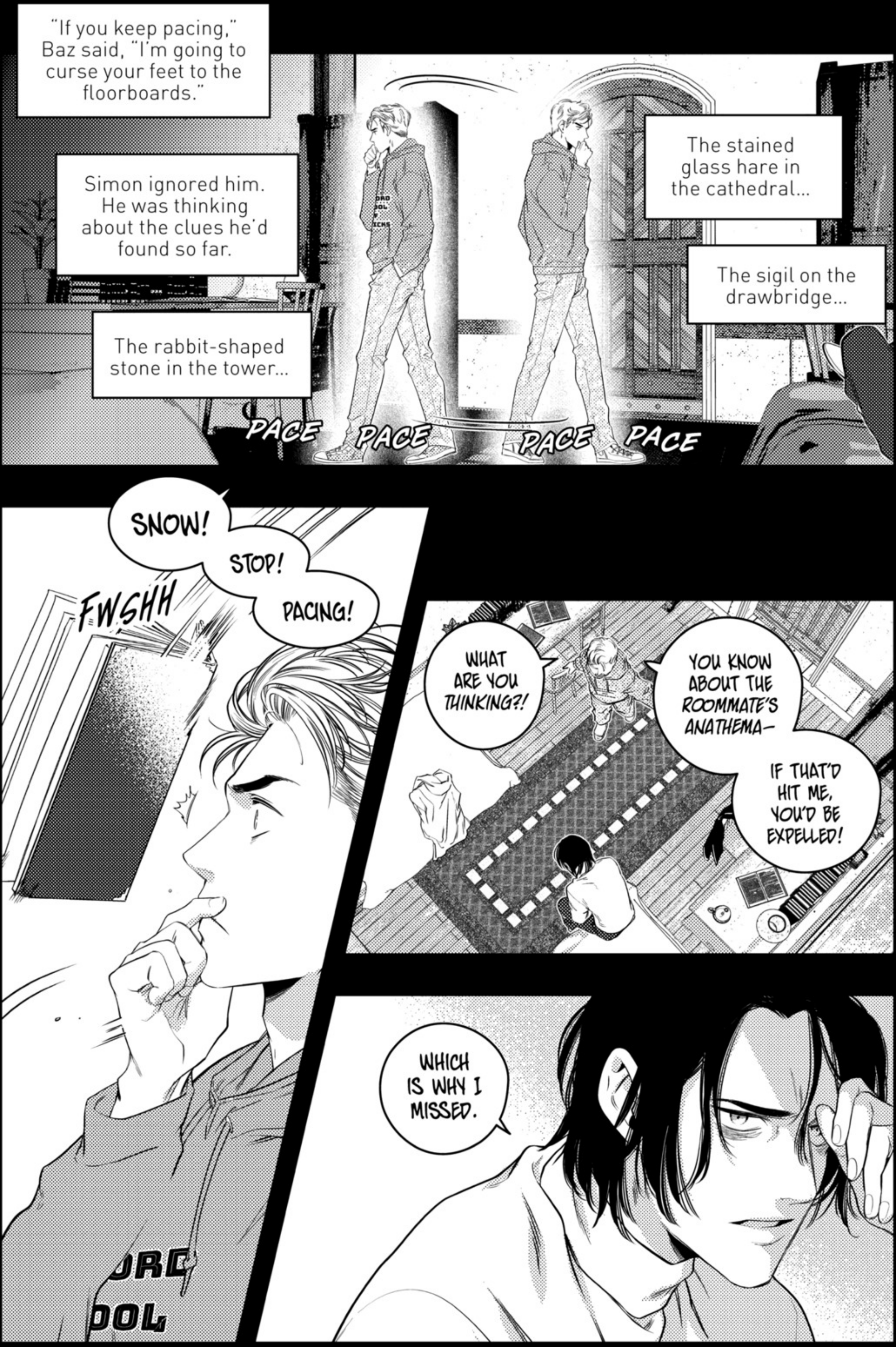

YOU JUST WANT TO MAKE FUN OF ME...
THAT'S WHAT YOU AND REAGAN DO WHEN I'M NOT HERE, RIGHT?
MAKE FUN OF ME.
PLAY WITH MY COMMEMORATIVE BUSTS.
DO YOU HAVE A STUPID NICKNAME FOR ME?
YEAH...
"CATHER."

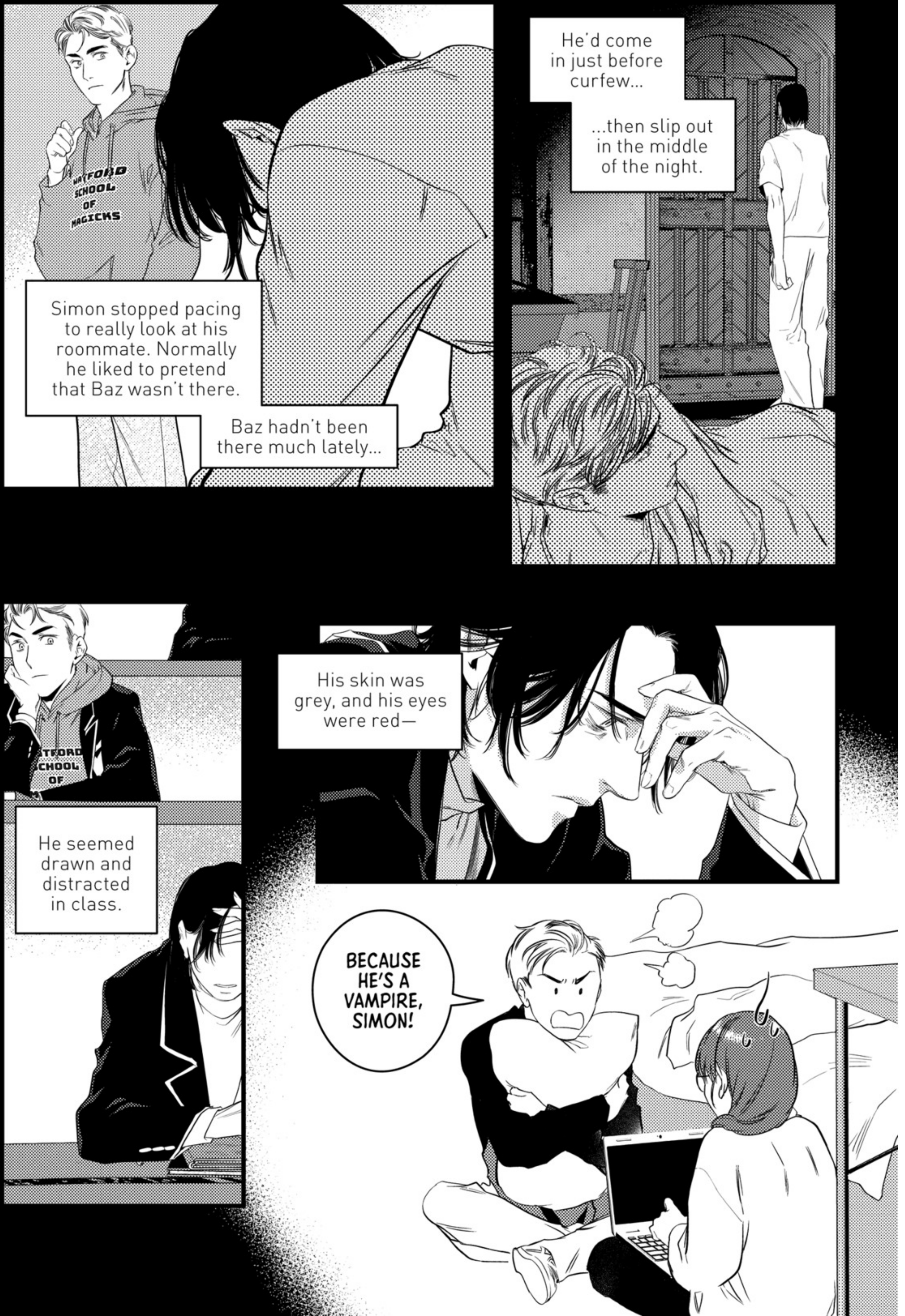

FLIP
I DON'T EXIST TO AMUSE YOU, YOU KNOW.
ONE, ARE YOU SURE? BECAUSE YOU DO.
AND *TWO*, WE DON'T MAKE FUN OF YOU.
VERY MUCH. ANYMORE.
AND *THREE*...
THREE, I WON'T MAKE FUN OF YOU, TO ANYONE BUT YOU, FROM NOW ON...
IF YOU'LL, JUST ONCE, RIGHT NOW, READ ME SOME OF YOUR FANFICTION.
HA HA HA
YOU'RE CURIOUS...
NOD

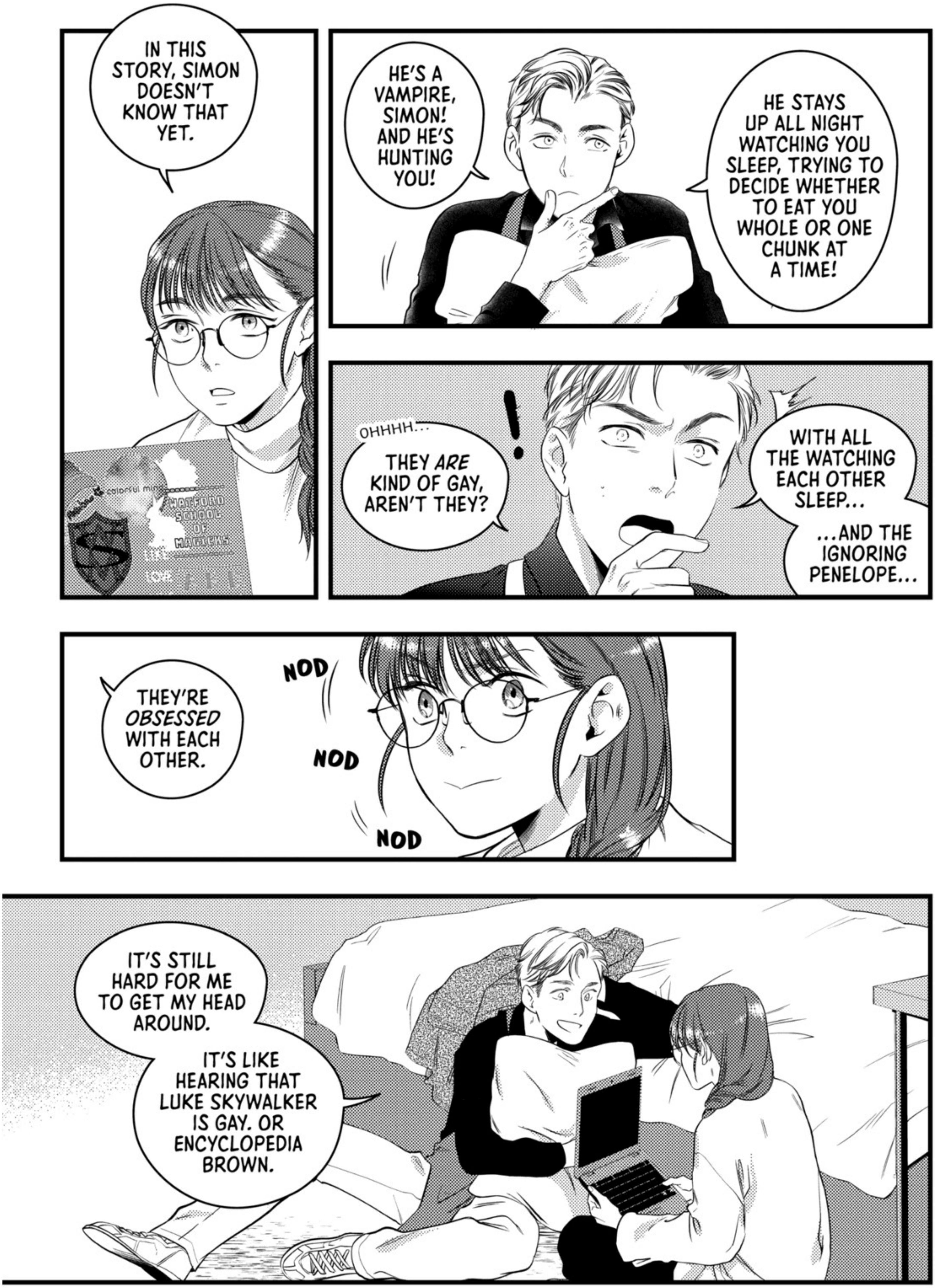

I GUESS I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO LOSE...
BUT WHAT DO I HAVE TO **GAIN?**
IT'S NOT LIKE LEVI IS GOING TO BE IMPRESSED.
ENTERTAINED ISN'T THE SAME AS IMPRESSED.
HE ALREADY THINKS I'M A WEIRDO. THIS IS JUST GOING TO MAKE ME SEEM THAT MUCH WEIRDER...
WHY DO I EVEN **WANT** HIS ATTENTION?
I'M NOT WREN. I DON'T NEED TO IMPRESS EVERY CUTE GUY I MEET.
AND LEVI'S NOT EVEN **THAT** CUTE...
HE'S ALL FOREHEAD. HE'S...AGING PREMATURELY.
I THINK HE SPENDS TOO MUCH TIME IN THE SUN.
OKAY.
I–
DON'T MAKE ME CHANGE MY MIND!
FWIP

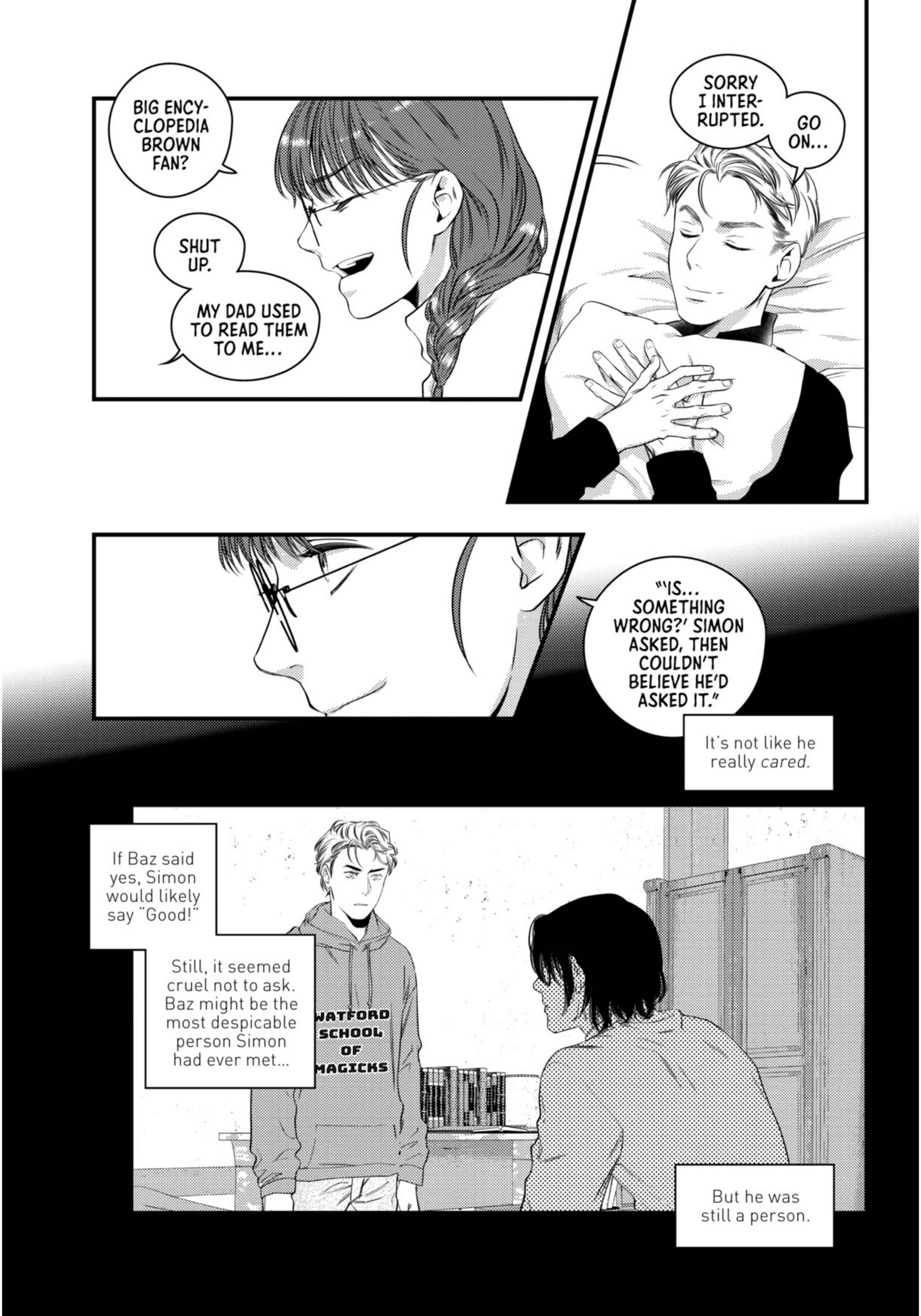

JUST... LET ME FIND SOMETHING...
I LOVE
NOTHING TOO ROMANTIC...
(OR DIRTY...)
MAYBE...
THIS'LL DO.
ALL RIGHT. YOU KNOW HOW IN *SIMON SNOW AND THE SIX WHITE HARES*—
BOOK 6. I'VE SEEN THE MOVIE.
SO, SIMON DOESN'T KNOW THAT THE MAGE IS HIS DAD—
HOW CAN HE *NOT* KNOW? IT'S SO OBVIOUS!
I KNOW, RIGHT?!
I THINK SIMON WANTS SO BADLY FOR THE MAGE TO BE HIS DAD THAT HE CAN'T SEE THE *OVERWHELMING* EVIDENCE.
BASIL KNOWS.
RAISE
OH, BAZ *TOTALLY* KNOWS.
I THINK PENELOPE KNOWS TOO.

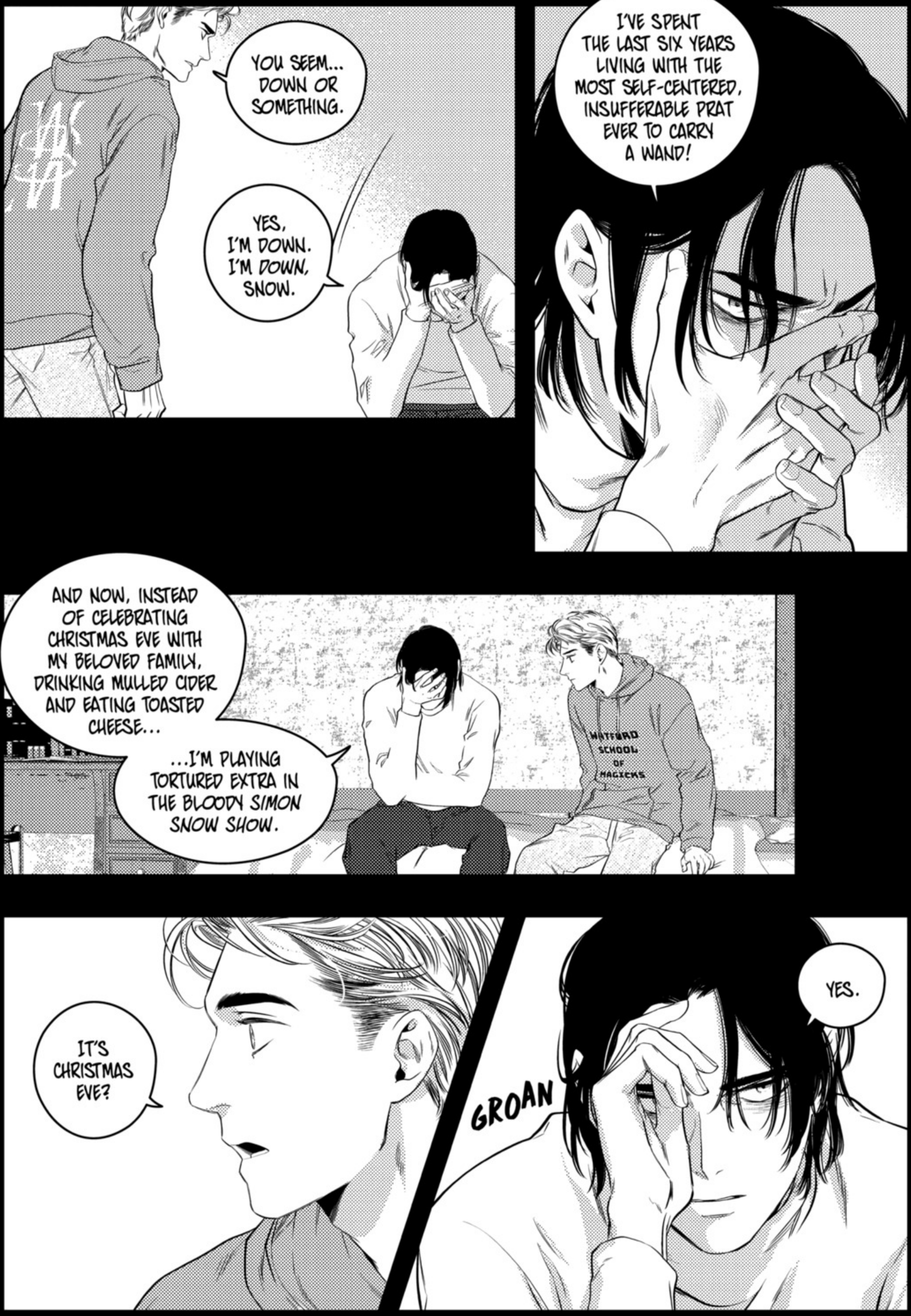

PENELOPE BUNCE.
EUGH
SHE'S LIKE A SISTER TO HIM!
NOT LIKE ANY OF MY SISTERS.
ANYWAY... THIS STORY TAKES PLACE DURING THE SIXTH BOOK.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE.
GOT IT. I'M READY!
AM I??

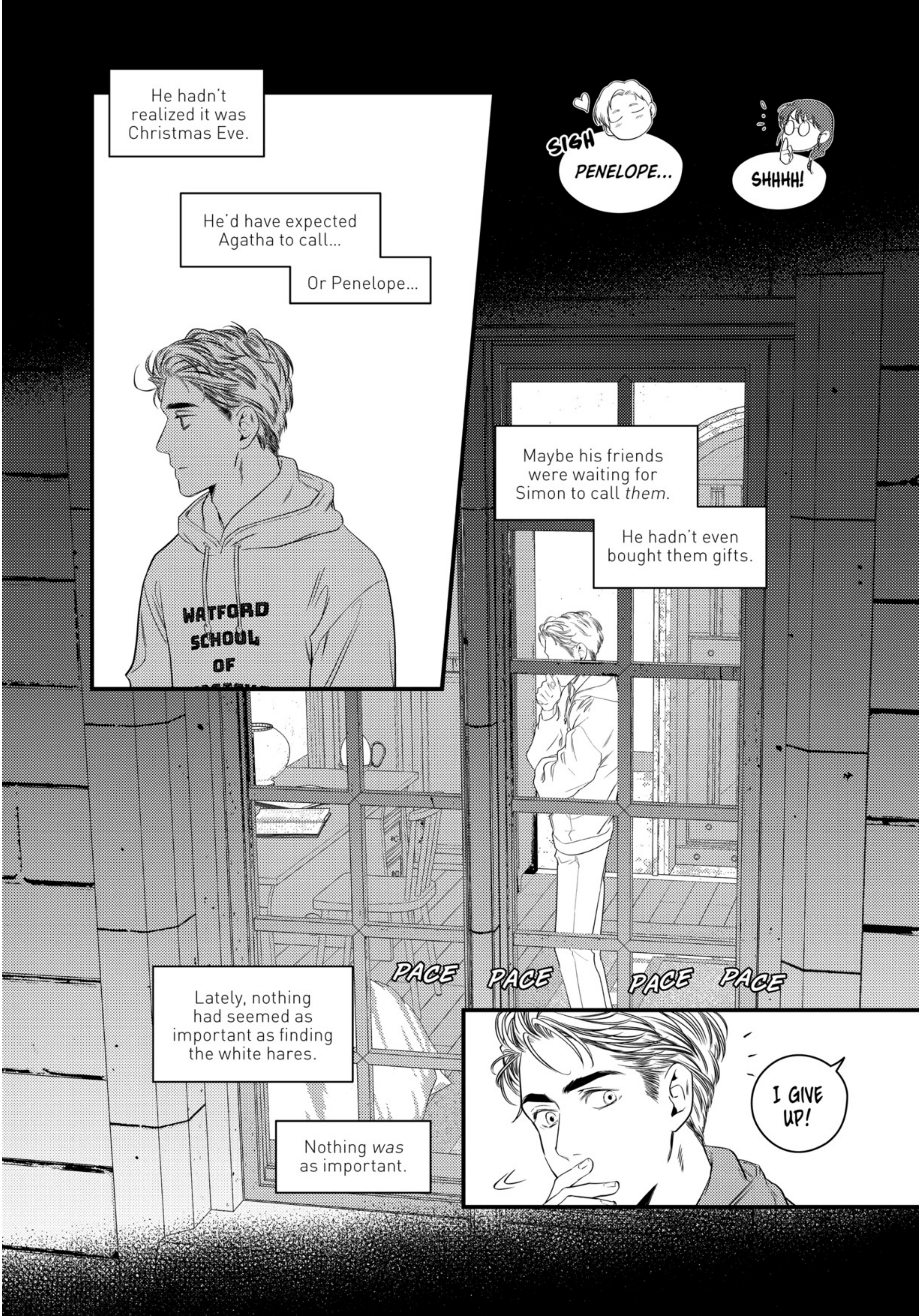

"If you keep pacing," Baz said, "I'm going to curse your feet to the floorboards."
Simon ignored him. He was thinking about the clues he'd found so far.
The rabbit-shaped stone in the tower...
The stained glass hare in the cathedral...
The sigil on the drawbridge...
PACE PACE PACE PACE
SNOW!
STOP!
PACING!
FWSHH
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?!
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ROOMMATE'S ANATHEMA—
IF THAT'D HIT ME, YOU'D BE EXPELLED!
WHICH IS WHY I MISSED.

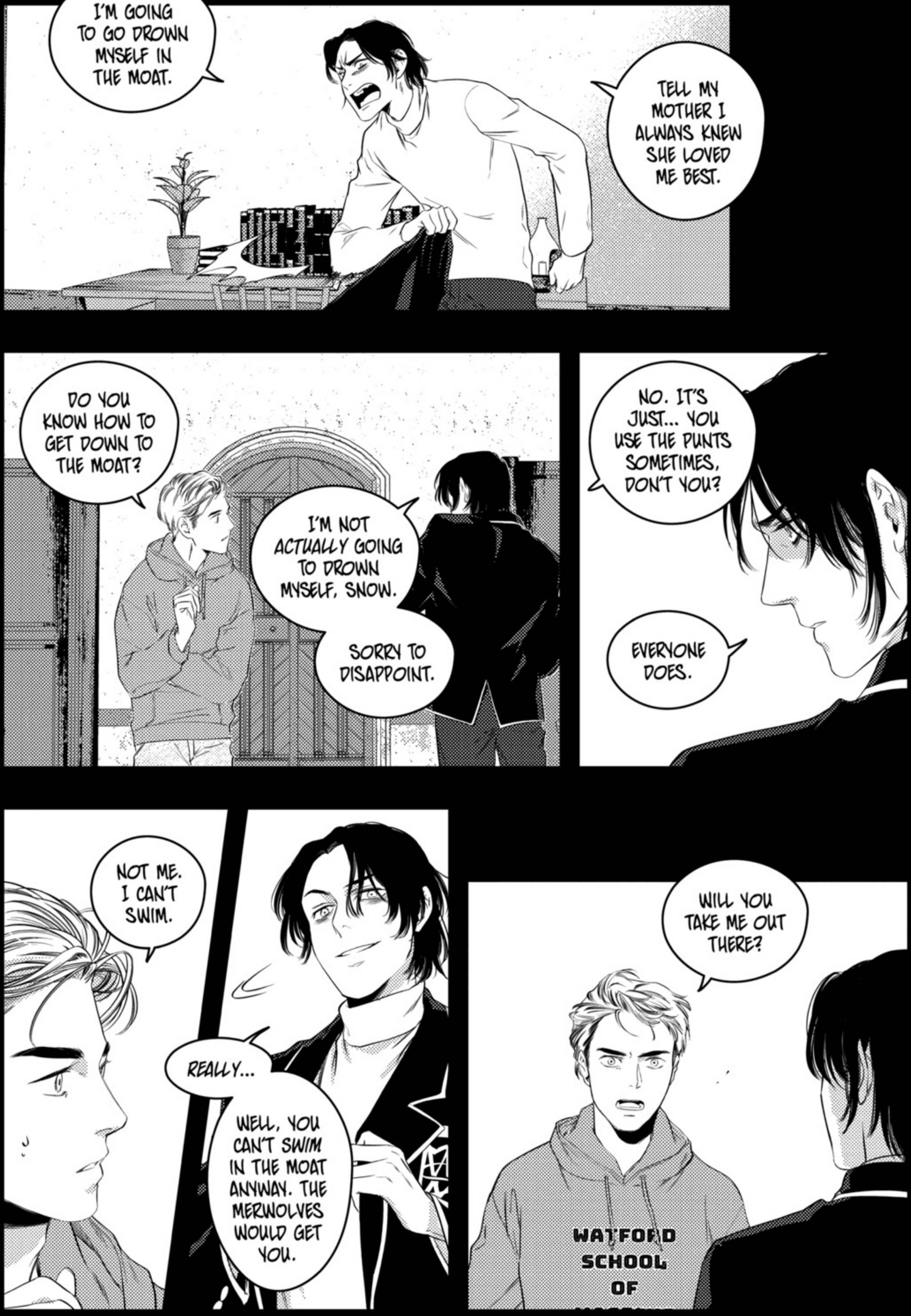

WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
Simon stopped pacing to really look at his roommate. Normally he liked to pretend that Baz wasn't there.
Baz hadn't been there much lately...
He'd come in just before curfew...
...then slip out in the middle of the night.
WATFORD SCHOOL OF
He seemed drawn and distracted in class.
His skin was grey, and his eyes were red—
BECAUSE HE'S A VAMPIRE, SIMON!

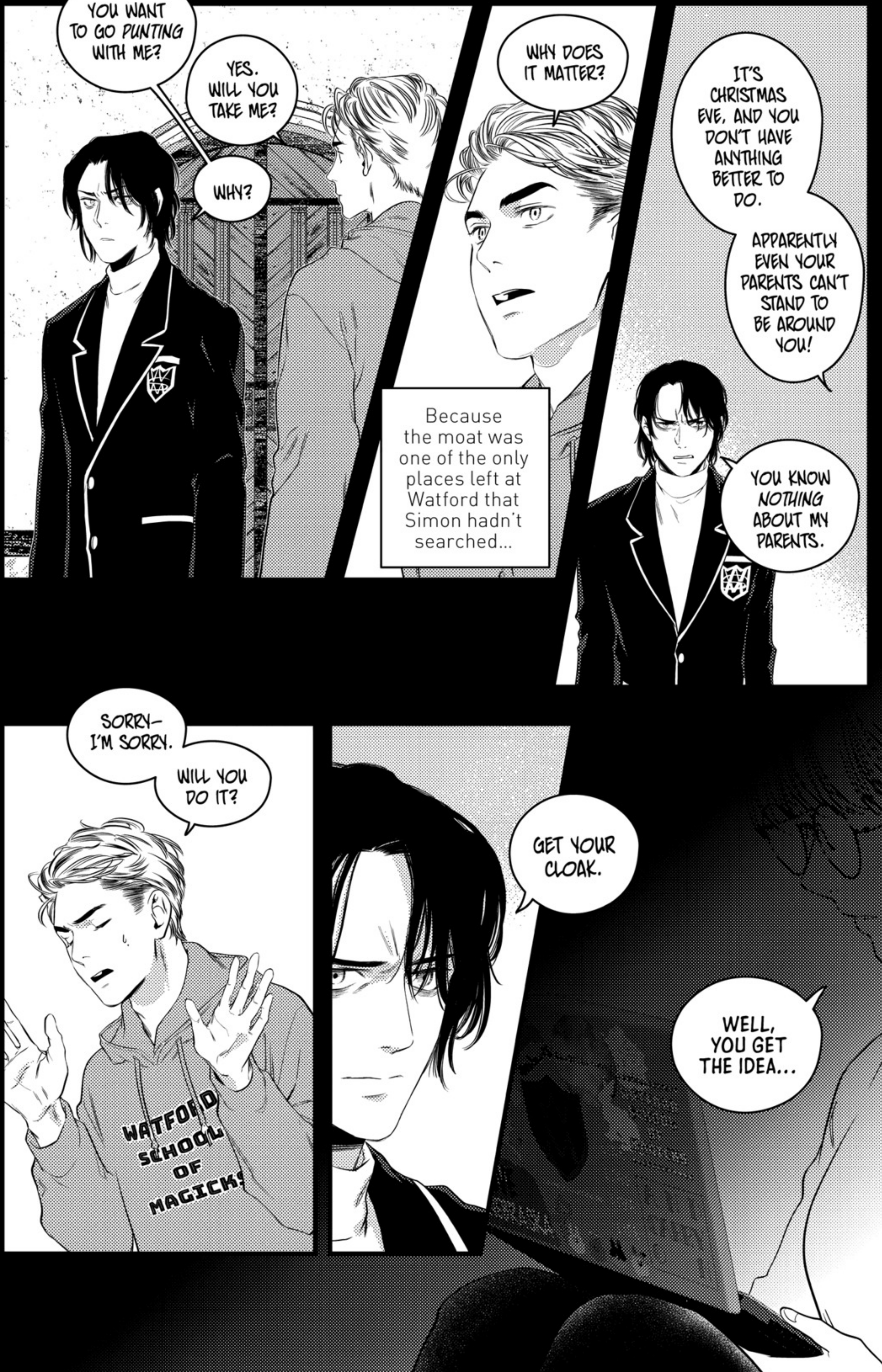

IN THIS STORY, SIMON DOESN'T KNOW THAT YET.
WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
HE'S A VAMPIRE, SIMON! AND HE'S HUNTING YOU!
HE STAYS UP ALL NIGHT WATCHING YOU SLEEP, TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO EAT YOU WHOLE OR ONE CHUNK AT A TIME!
OHHHH...
THEY *ARE* KIND OF GAY, AREN'T THEY?
!
WITH ALL THE WATCHING EACH OTHER SLEEP...
...AND THE IGNORING PENELOPE...
THEY'RE *OBSESSED* WITH EACH OTHER.
NOD
NOD
NOD
IT'S STILL HARD FOR ME TO GET MY HEAD AROUND.
IT'S LIKE HEARING THAT LUKE SKYWALKER IS GAY. OR ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN.

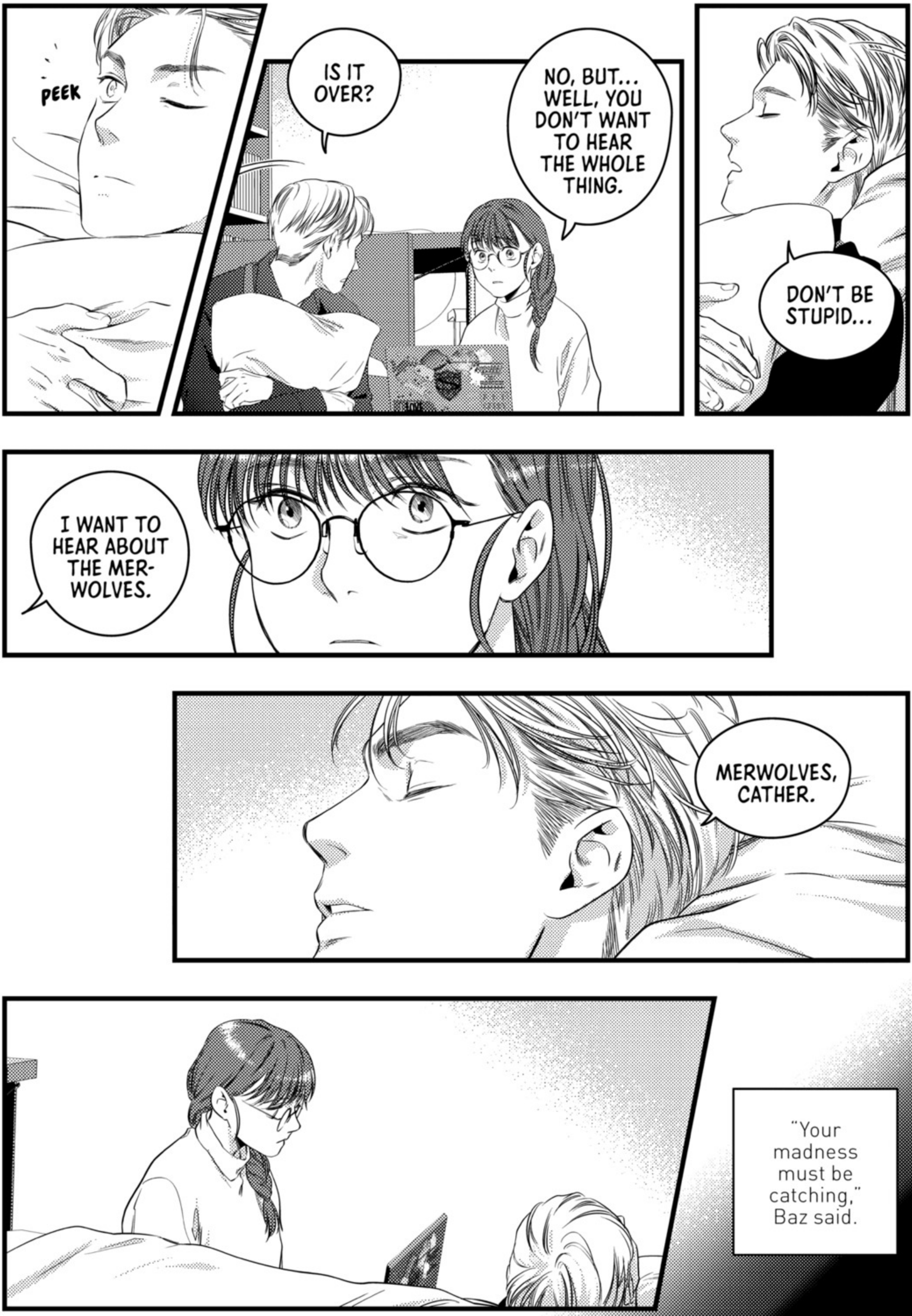

BIG ENCY-CLOPEDIA BROWN FAN?
SHUT UP.
MY DAD USED TO READ THEM TO ME...
SORRY I INTER-RUPTED.
GO ON...
"'IS... SOMETHING WRONG?' SIMON ASKED, THEN COULDN'T BELIEVE HE'D ASKED IT."
It's not like he really *cared*.
If Baz said yes, Simon would likely say "Good!"
Still, it seemed cruel not to ask. Baz might be the most despicable person Simon had ever met...
WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
But he was still a person.

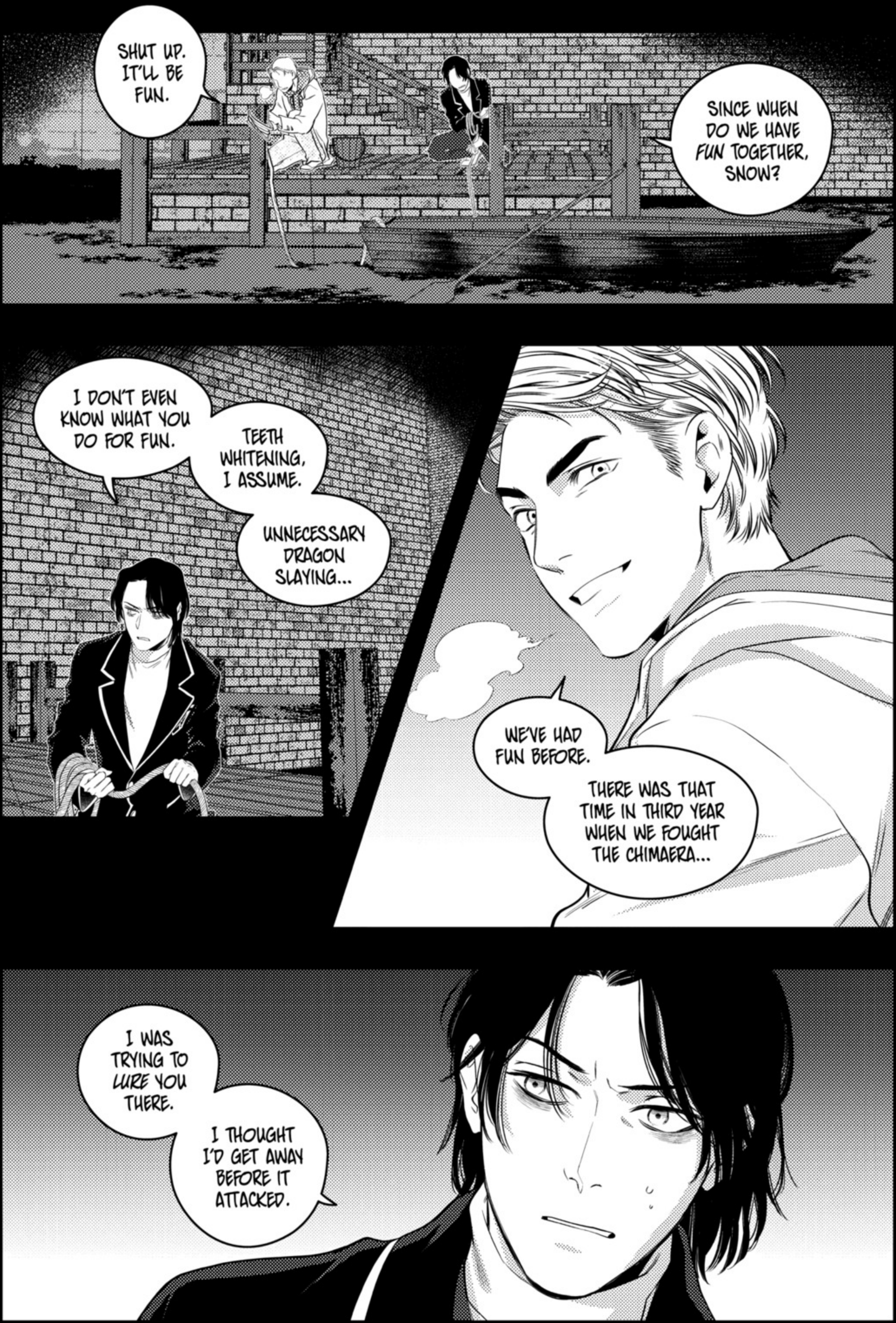

YOU SEEM... DOWN OR SOMETHING.
YES, I'M DOWN. I'M DOWN, SNOW.
I'VE SPENT THE LAST SIX YEARS LIVING WITH THE MOST SELF-CENTERED, INSUFFERABLE PRAT EVER TO CARRY A WAND!
AND NOW, INSTEAD OF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS EVE WITH MY BELOVED FAMILY, DRINKING MULLED CIDER AND EATING TOASTED CHEESE...
...I'M PLAYING TORTURED EXTRA IN THE BLOODY *SIMON SNOW SHOW*.
WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE?
YES.
GROAN

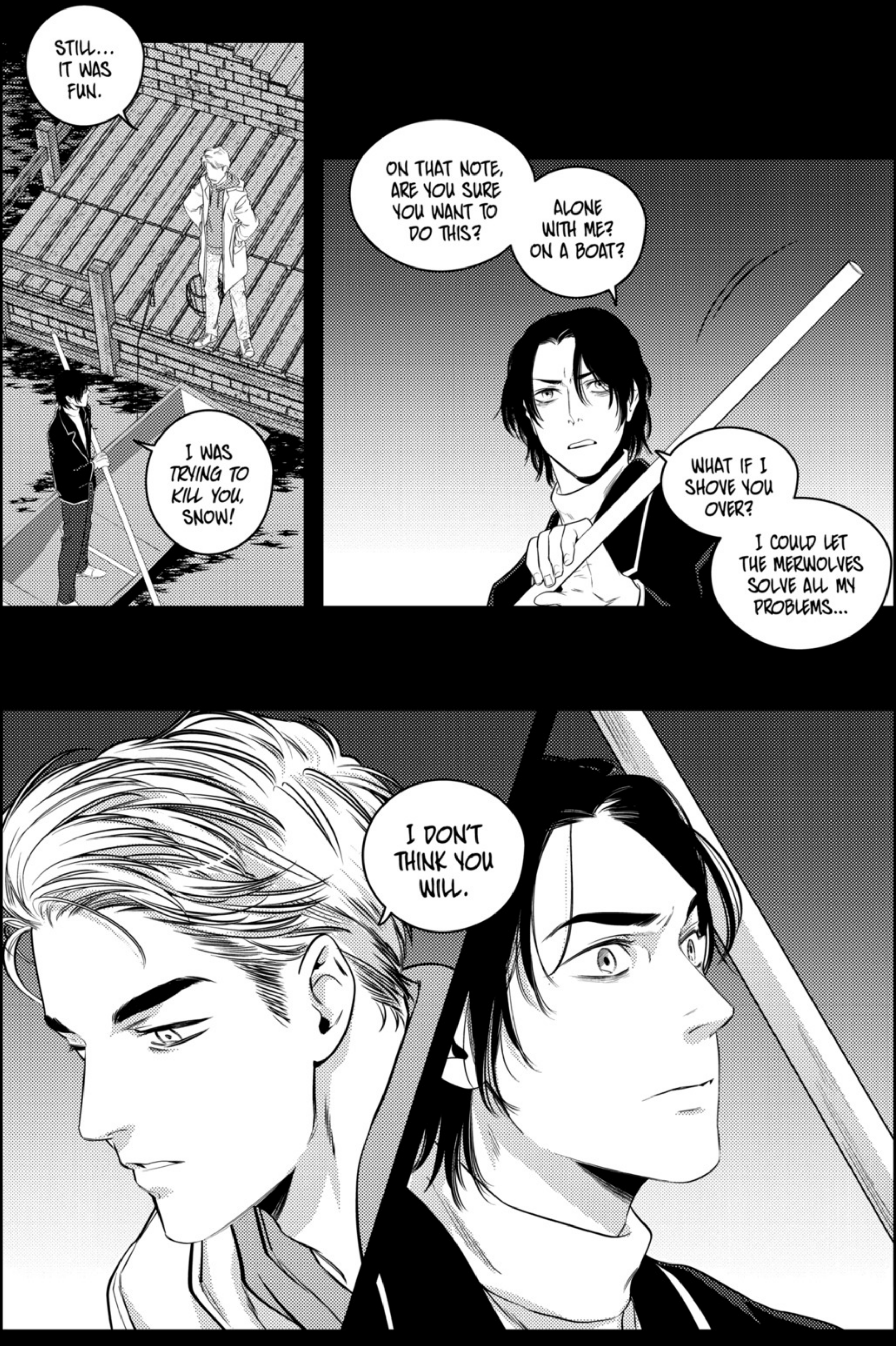

He hadn't realized it was Christmas Eve.
He'd have expected Agatha to call...
Or Penelope...
WATFORD SCHOOL OF
SIGH
PENELOPE...
SHHHH!
Maybe his friends were waiting for Simon to call *them*.
He hadn't even bought them gifts.
PACE
PACE
PACE
PACE
Lately, nothing had seemed as important as finding the white hares.
Nothing *was* as important.
I GIVE UP!

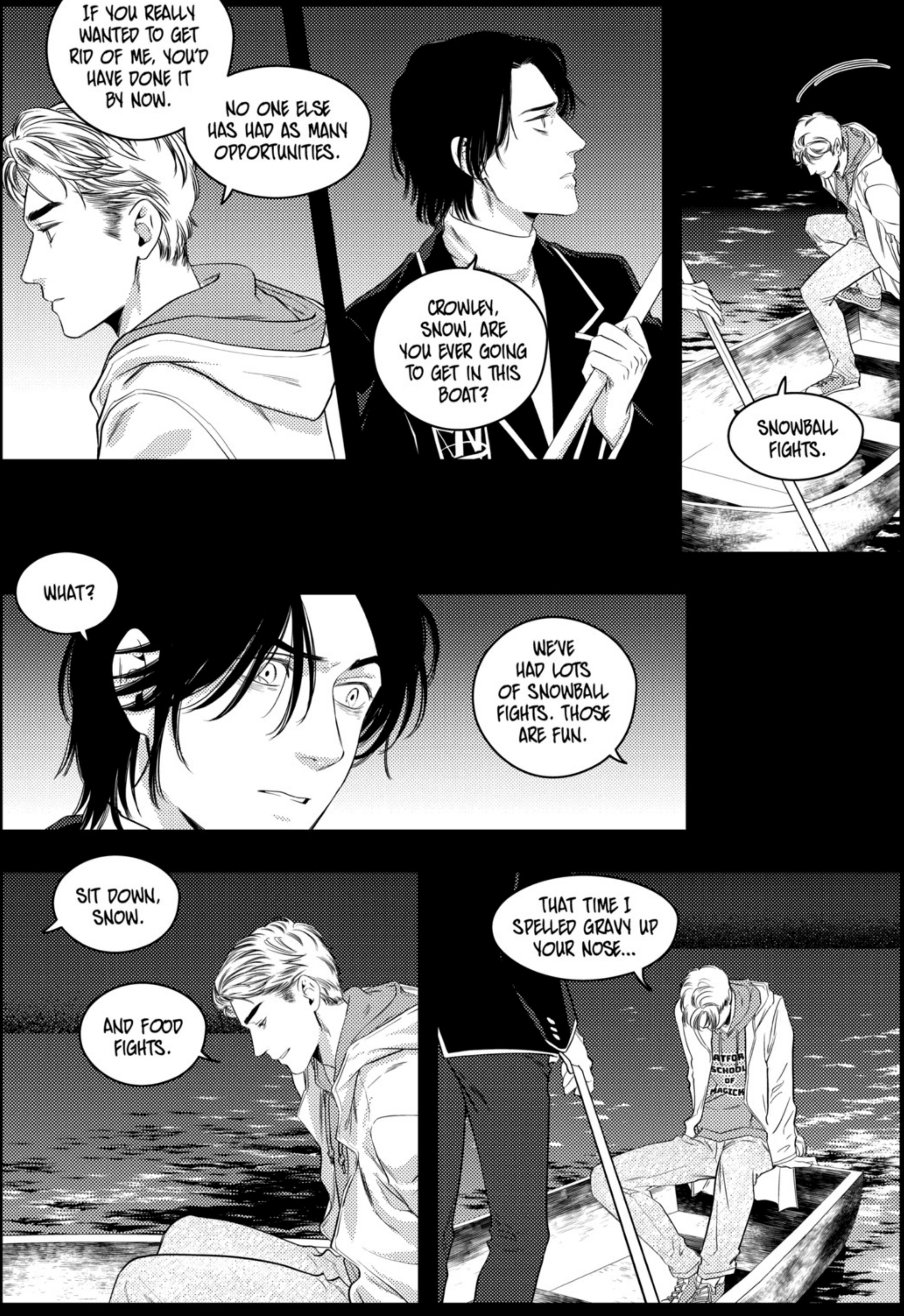

I'M GOING TO GO DROWN MYSELF IN THE MOAT.
TELL MY MOTHER I ALWAYS KNEW SHE LOVED ME BEST.
DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET DOWN TO THE MOAT?
I'M NOT ACTUALLY GOING TO DROWN MYSELF, SNOW.
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT.
NO. IT'S JUST... YOU USE THE PUNTS SOMETIMES, DON'T YOU?
EVERYONE DOES.
NOT ME. I CAN'T SWIM.
REALLY...
WELL, YOU CAN'T SWIM IN THE MOAT ANYWAY. THE MERWOLVES WOULD GET YOU.
WILL YOU TAKE ME OUT THERE?
WATFORD
SCHOOL
OF

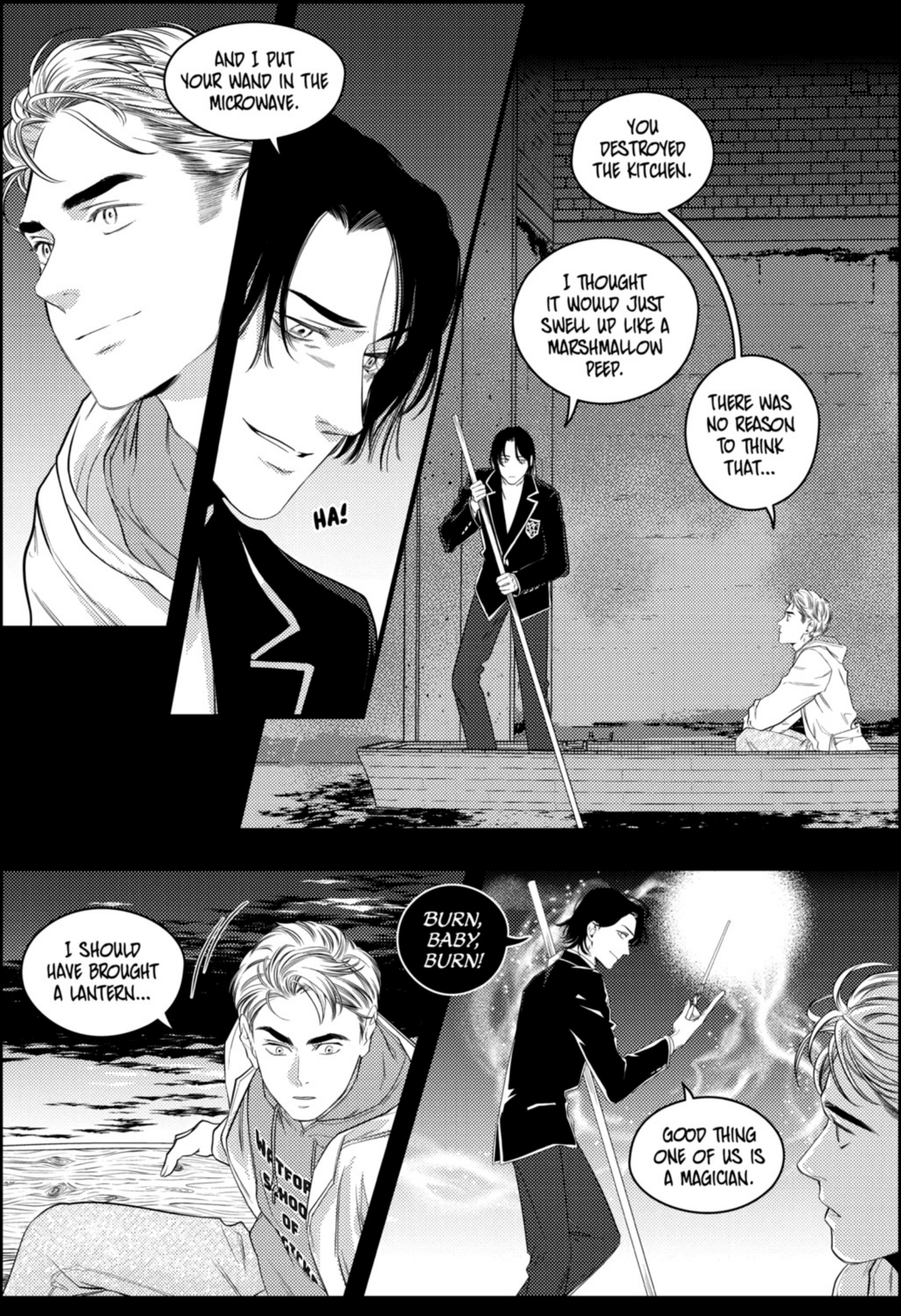

YOU WANT TO GO PUNTING WITH ME?
YES. WILL YOU TAKE ME?
WHY?
WHY DOES IT MATTER?
Because the moat was one of the only places left at Watford that Simon hadn't searched...
IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE, AND YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO.
APPARENTLY EVEN YOUR PARENTS CAN'T STAND TO BE AROUND YOU!
YOU KNOW *NOTHING* ABOUT MY PARENTS.
SORRY— I'M SORRY.
WILL YOU DO IT?
WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
GET YOUR CLOAK.
WELL, YOU GET THE IDEA...

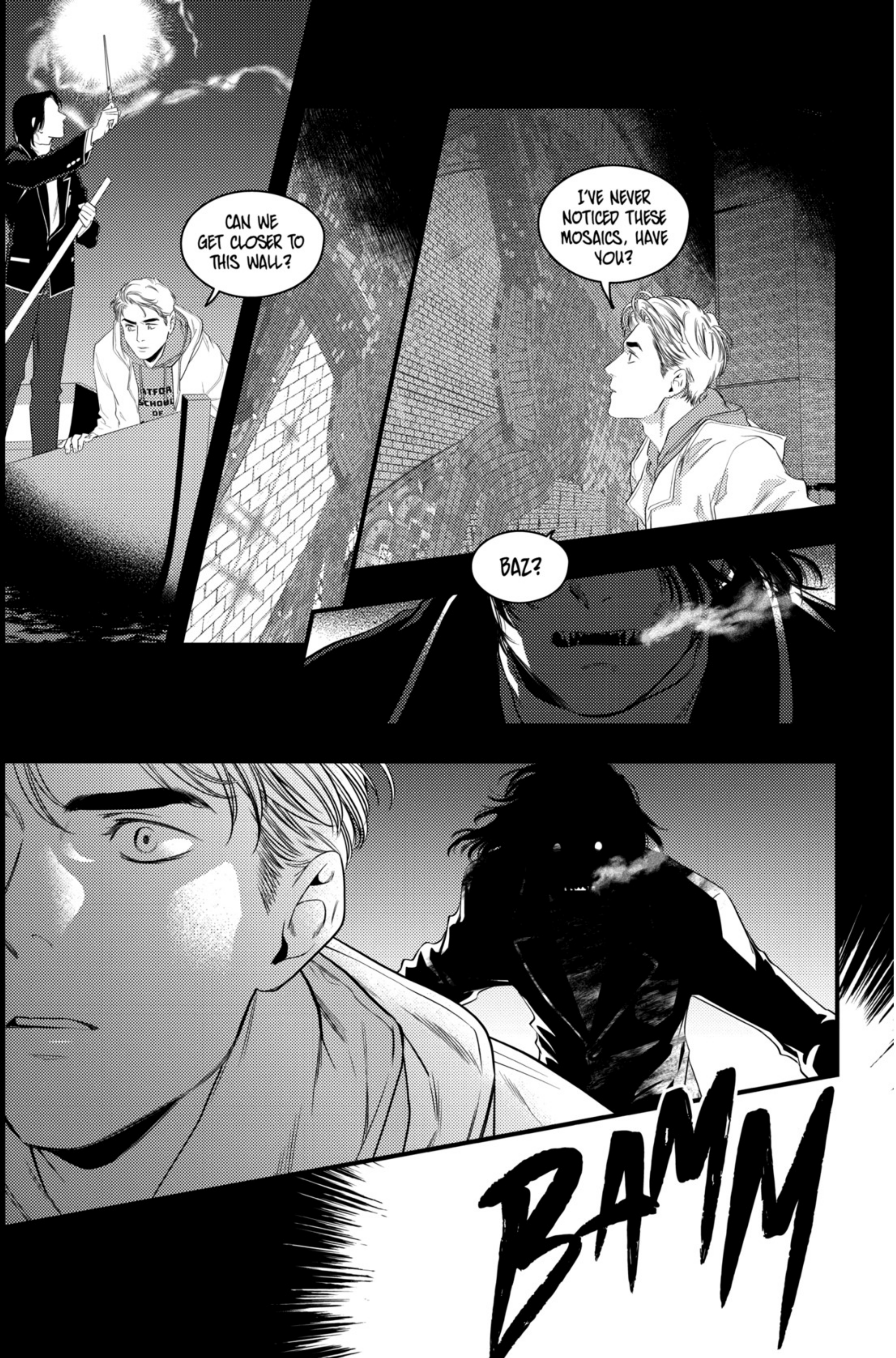

PEEK
IS IT OVER?
NO, BUT... WELL, YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR THE WHOLE THING.
DON'T BE STUPID...
I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE MERWOLVES.
MERWOLVES, CATHER.
"Your madness must be catching," Baz said.

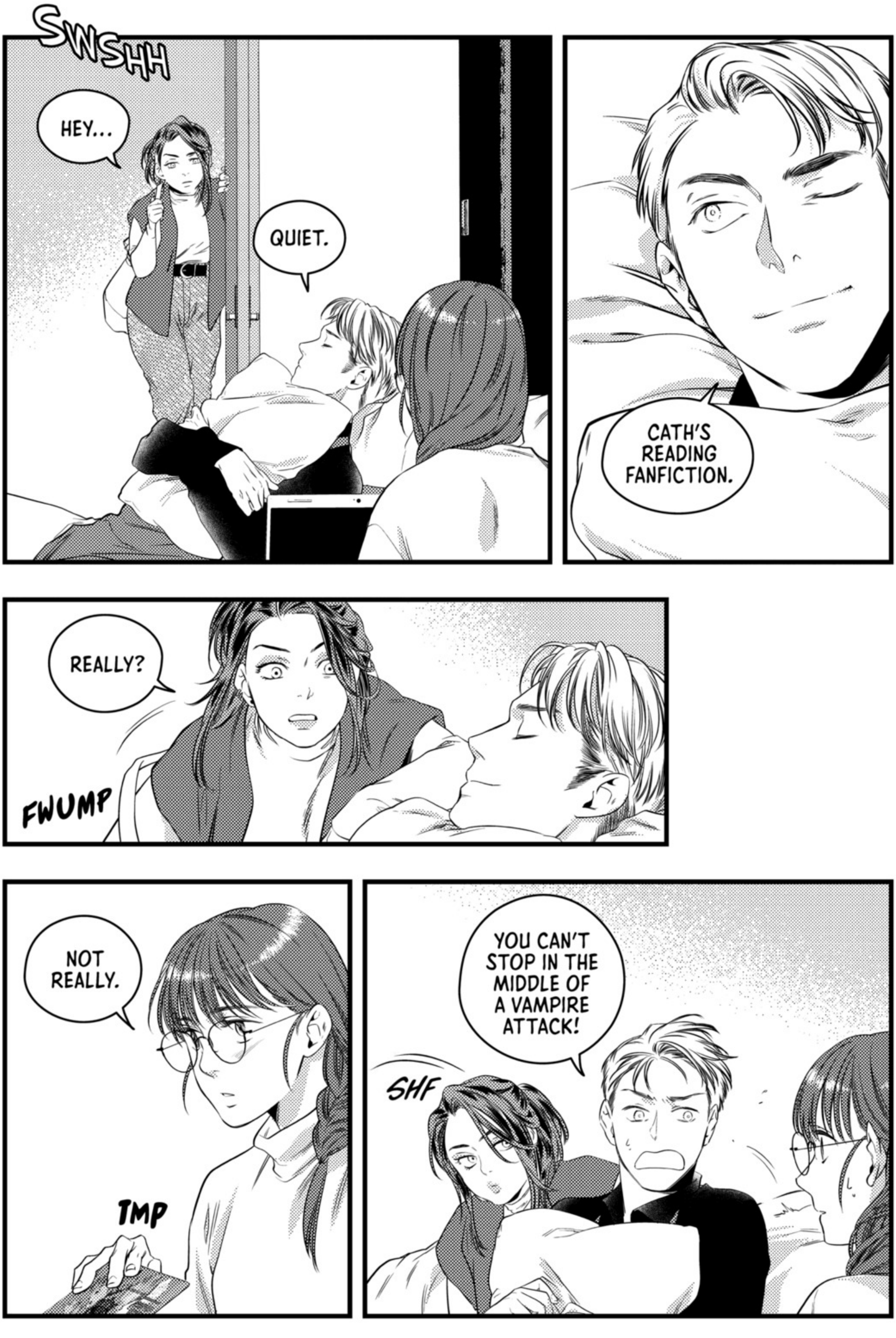

SHUT UP. IT'LL BE FUN.
SINCE WHEN DO WE HAVE FUN TOGETHER, SNOW?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU DO FOR FUN.
TEETH WHITENING, I ASSUME.
UNNECESSARY DRAGON SLAYING...
WE'VE HAD FUN BEFORE.
THERE WAS THAT TIME IN THIRD YEAR WHEN WE FOUGHT THE CHIMAERA...
I WAS TRYING TO LURE YOU THERE.
I THOUGHT I'D GET AWAY BEFORE IT ATTACKED.

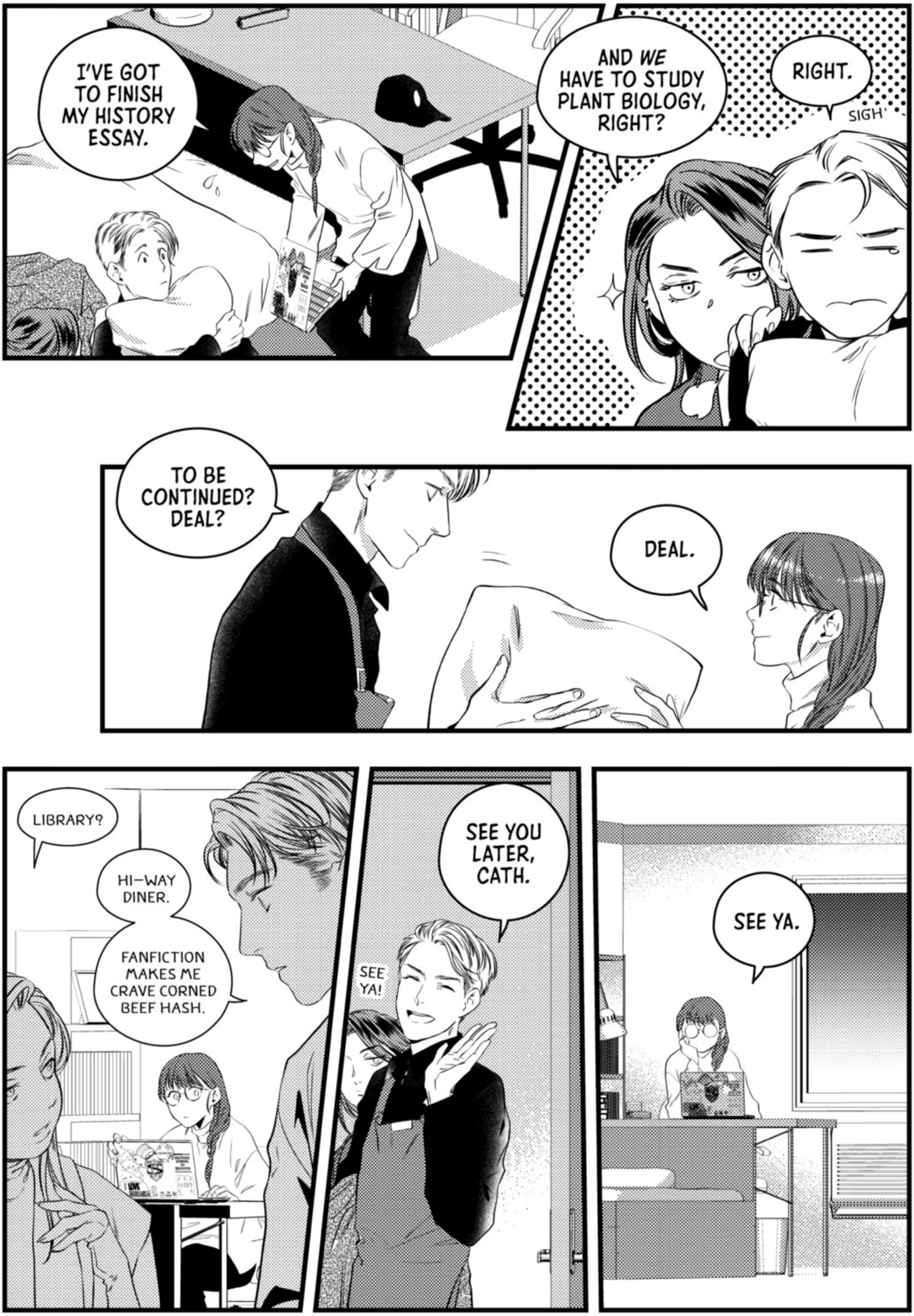

STILL… IT WAS FUN.
I WAS TRYING TO KILL YOU, SNOW!
ON THAT NOTE, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?
ALONE WITH ME? ON A BOAT?
WHAT IF I SHOVE YOU OVER?
I COULD LET THE MERWOLVES SOLVE ALL MY PROBLEMS…
I DON'T THINK YOU WILL.


IF YOU REALLY WANTED TO GET RID OF ME, YOU'D HAVE DONE IT BY NOW.
NO ONE ELSE HAS HAD AS MANY OPPORTUNITIES.
CROWLEY, SNOW, ARE YOU EVER GOING TO GET IN THIS BOAT?
SNOWBALL FIGHTS.
WHAT?
WE'VE HAD LOTS OF SNOWBALL FIGHTS. THOSE ARE FUN.
SIT DOWN, SNOW.
AND FOOD FIGHTS.
THAT TIME I SPELLED GRAVY UP YOUR NOSE...
ATFOR SCHOOL OF MAGICK


AND I PUT YOUR WAND IN THE MICROWAVE.
HA!
YOU DESTROYED THE KITCHEN.
I THOUGHT IT WOULD JUST SWELL UP LIKE A MARSHMALLOW PEEP.
THERE WAS NO REASON TO THINK THAT...
I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT A LANTERN...
BURN, BABY, BURN!
GOOD THING ONE OF US IS A MAGICIAN.

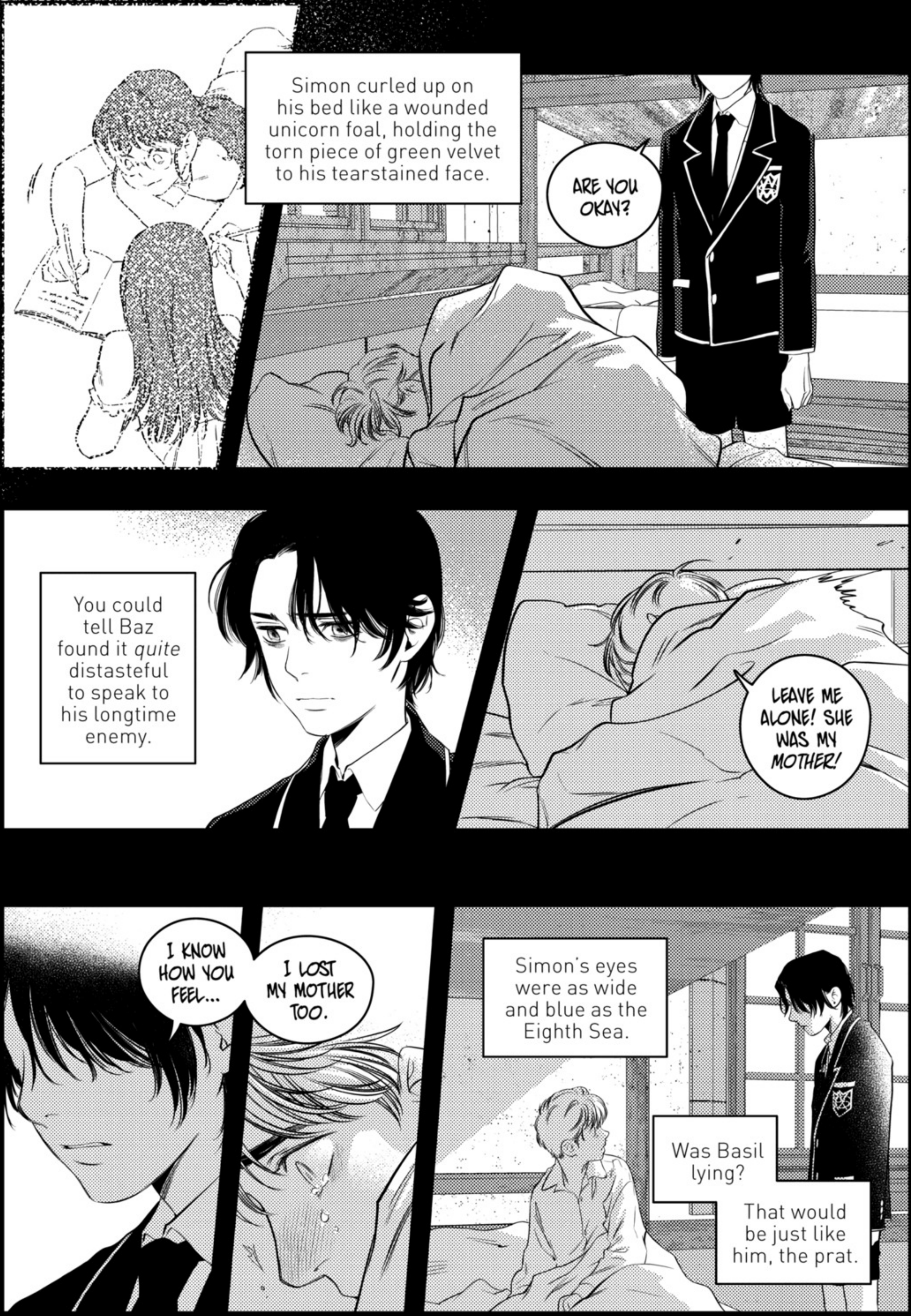

CAN WE GET CLOSER TO THIS WALL?
I'VE NEVER NOTICED THESE MOSAICS, HAVE YOU?
BAZ?
BAMM

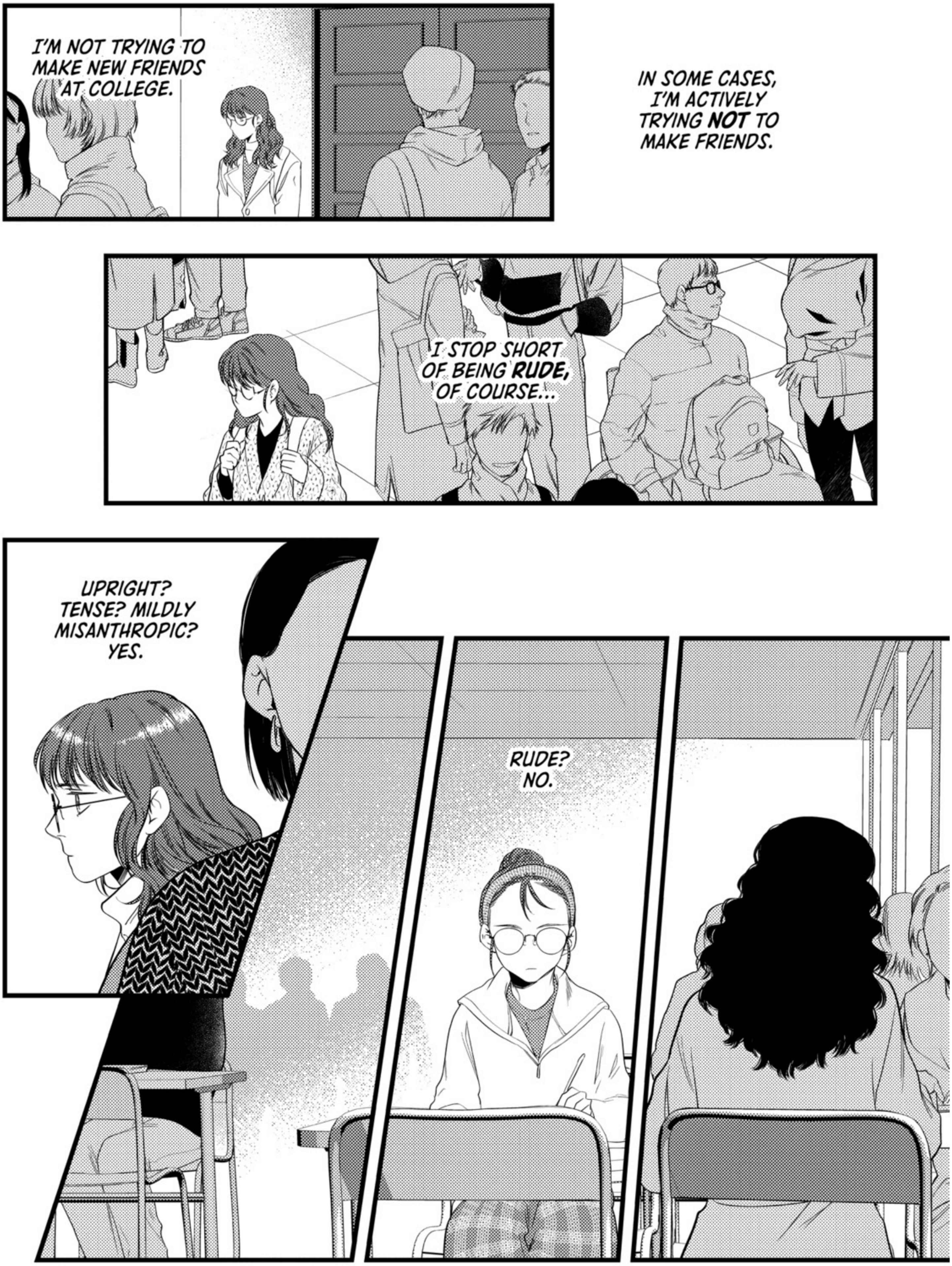

SWSHH
HEY...
QUIET.
CATH'S READING FANFICTION.
REALLY?
FWUMP
NOT REALLY.
TMP
YOU CAN'T STOP IN THE MIDDLE OF A VAMPIRE ATTACK!
SHF

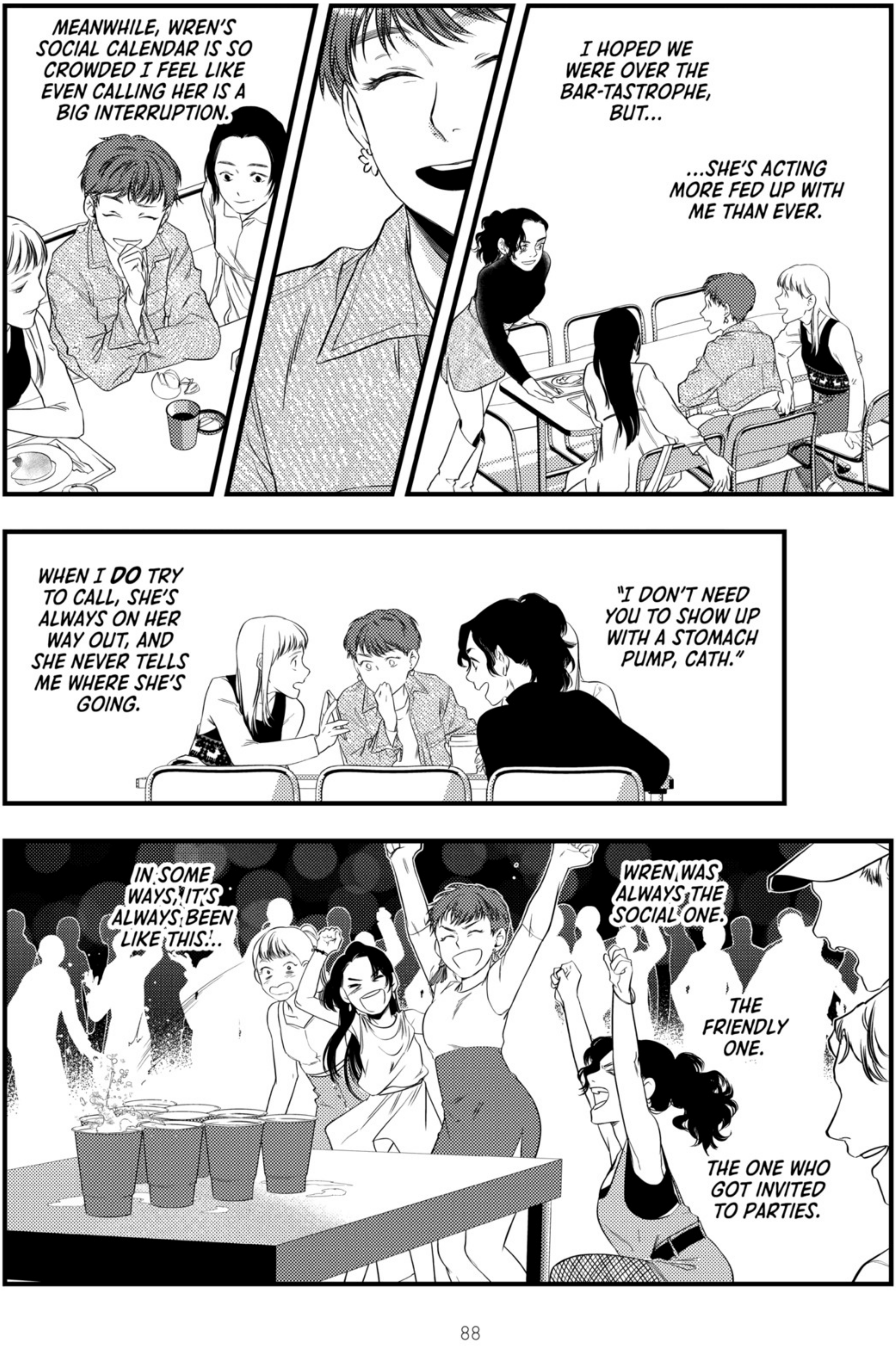

I'VE GOT TO FINISH MY HISTORY ESSAY.
AND *WE* HAVE TO STUDY PLANT BIOLOGY, RIGHT?
RIGHT.
SIGH
TO BE CONTINUED? DEAL?
DEAL.
LIBRARY?
HI-WAY DINER.
FANFICTION MAKES ME CRAVE CORNED BEEF HASH.
SEE YOU LATER, CATH.
SEE YA!
SEE YA.

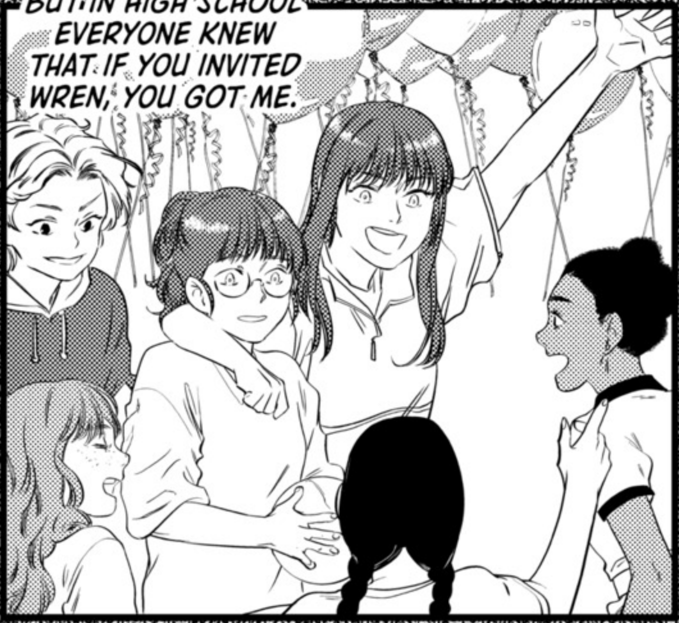
From "Friends for Life and After"

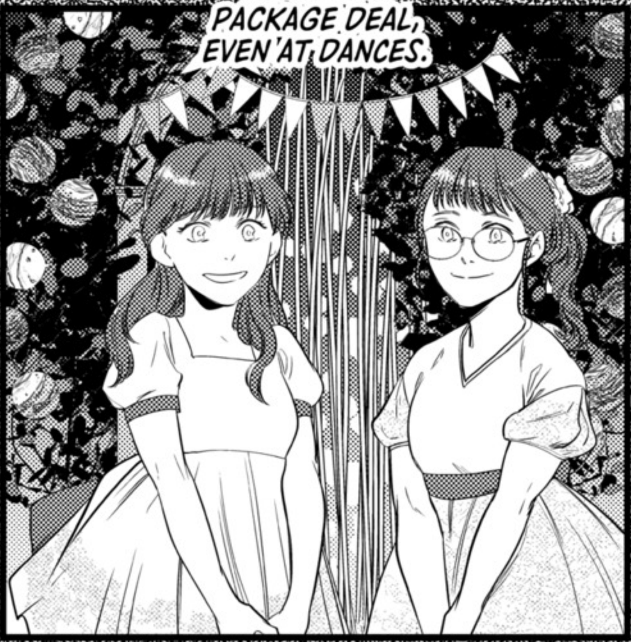
by Magicath and Wrenegade, age 12

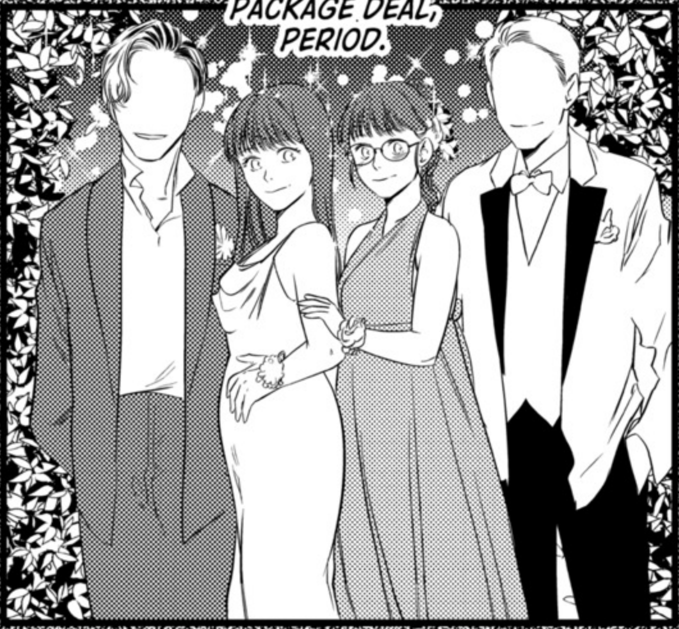

Simon curled up on his bed like a wounded unicorn foal, holding the torn piece of green velvet to his tearstained face.
ARE YOU OKAY?
You could tell Baz found it *quite* distasteful to speak to his longtime enemy.
LEAVE ME ALONE! SHE WAS MY *MOTHER!*
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL...
I LOST MY MOTHER TOO.
Simon's eyes were as wide and blue as the Eighth Sea.
Was Basil lying?
That would be just like him, the prat.

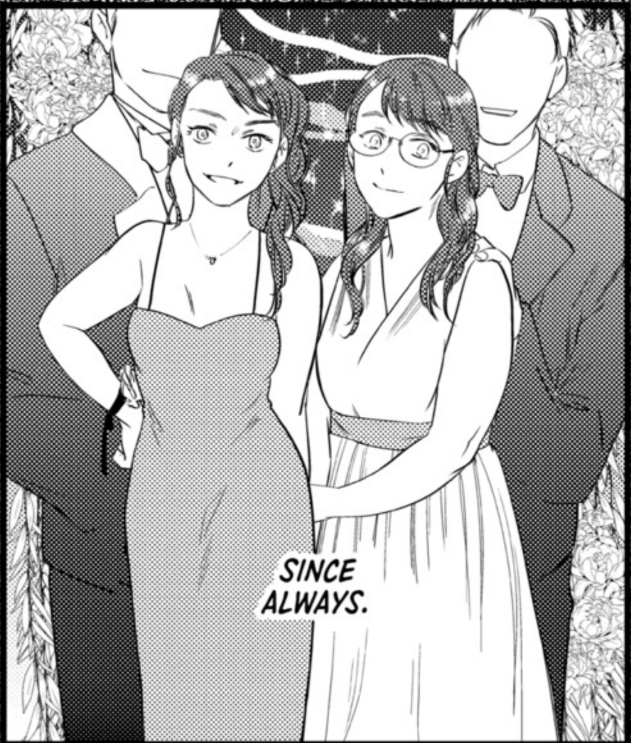

I'M NOT TRYING TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AT COLLEGE.
IN SOME CASES, I'M ACTIVELY TRYING **NOT** TO MAKE FRIENDS.
I STOP SHORT OF BEING **RUDE,** OF COURSE...
UPRIGHT? TENSE? MILDLY MISANTHROPIC? YES.
RUDE? NO.

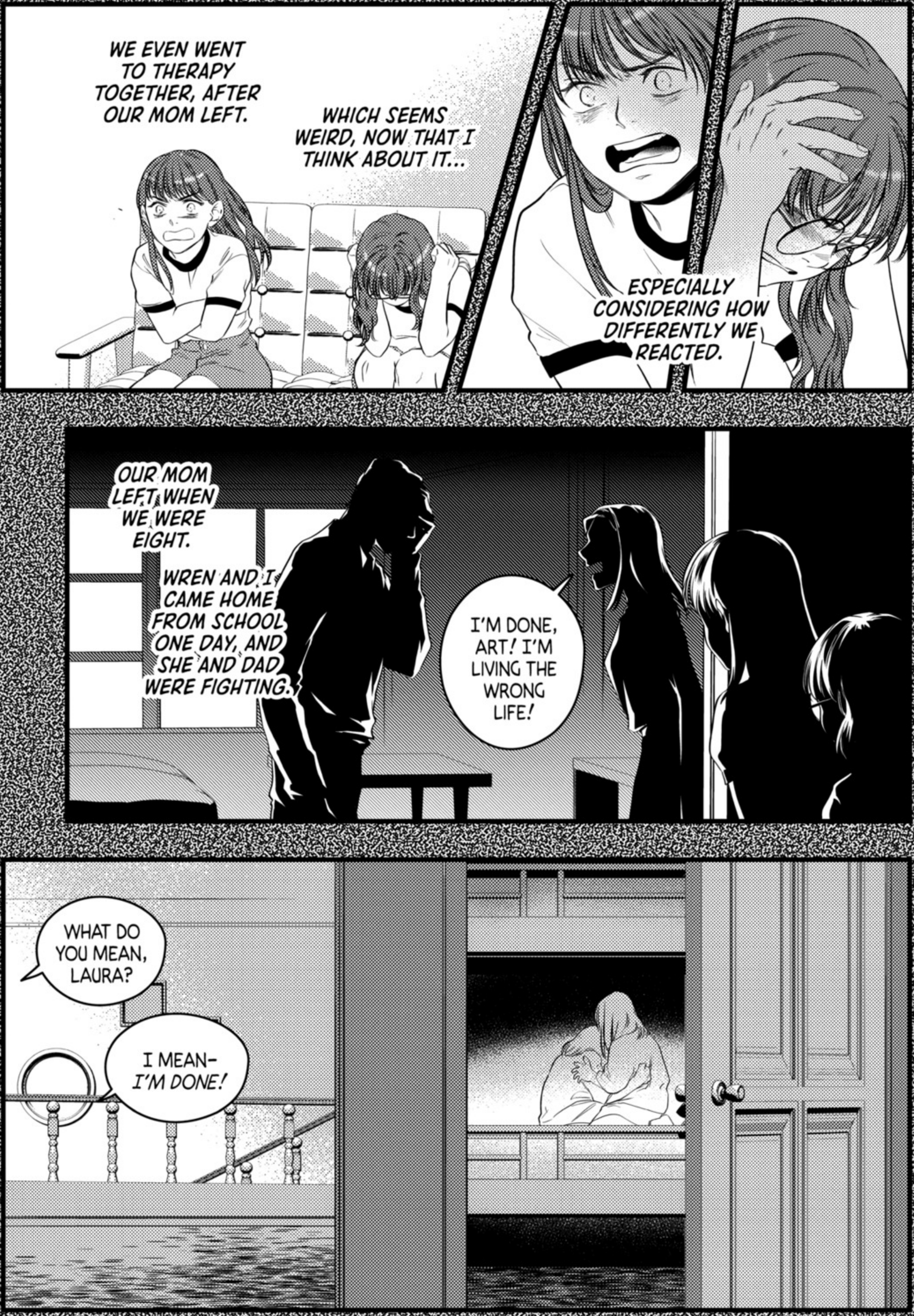

MEANWHILE, WREN'S SOCIAL CALENDAR IS SO CROWDED I FEEL LIKE EVEN CALLING HER IS A BIG INTERRUPTION.
I HOPED WE WERE OVER THE BAR-TASTROPHE, BUT...
...SHE'S ACTING MORE FED UP WITH ME THAN EVER.
WHEN I DO TRY TO CALL, SHE'S ALWAYS ON HER WAY OUT, AND SHE NEVER TELLS ME WHERE SHE'S GOING.
"I DON'T NEED YOU TO SHOW UP WITH A STOMACH PUMP, CATH."
IN SOME WAYS, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS...
WREN WAS ALWAYS THE SOCIAL ONE.
THE FRIENDLY ONE.
THE ONE WHO GOT INVITED TO PARTIES.

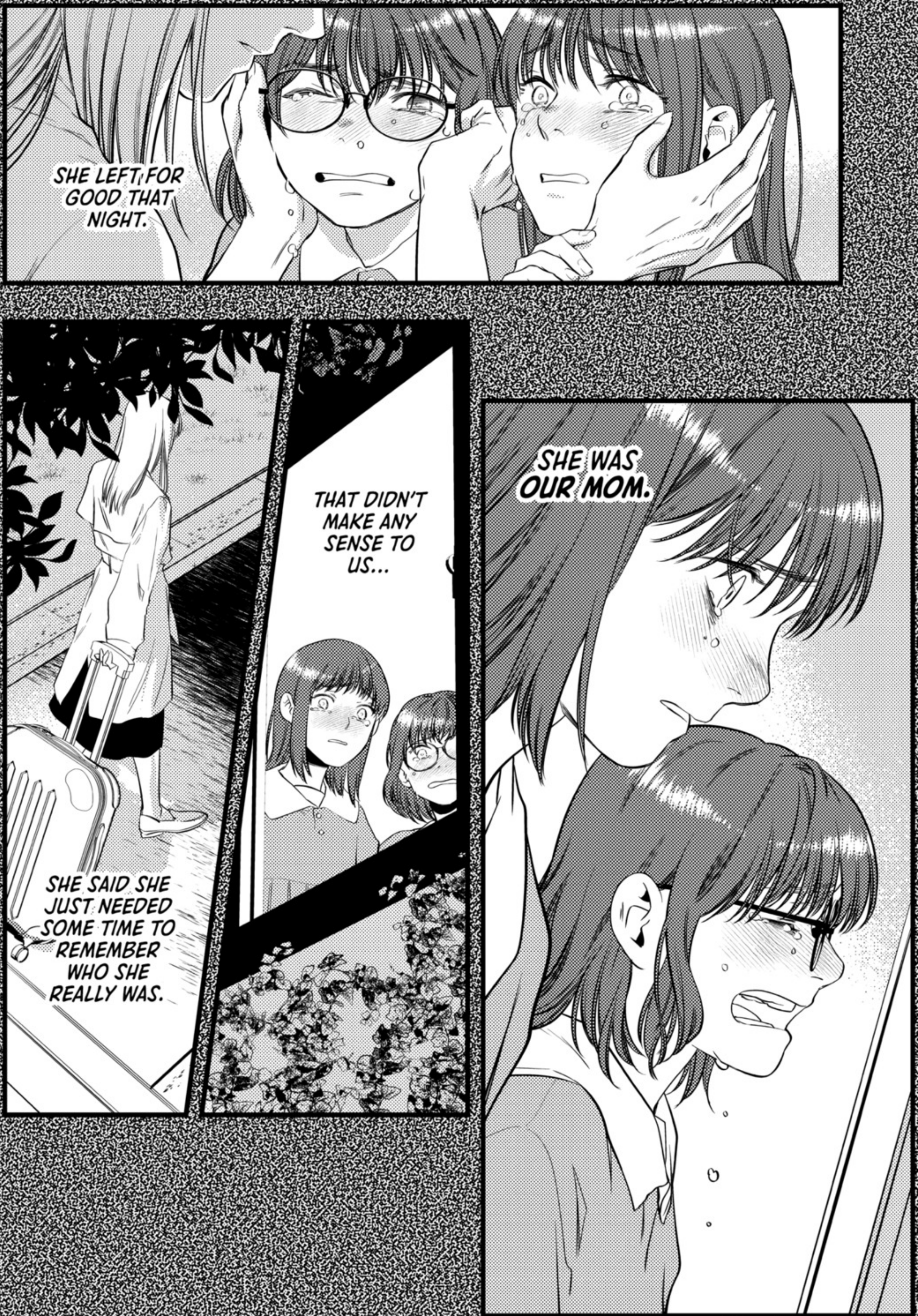

BUT IN HIGH SCHOOL EVERYONE KNEW THAT IF YOU INVITED WREN, YOU GOT ME.

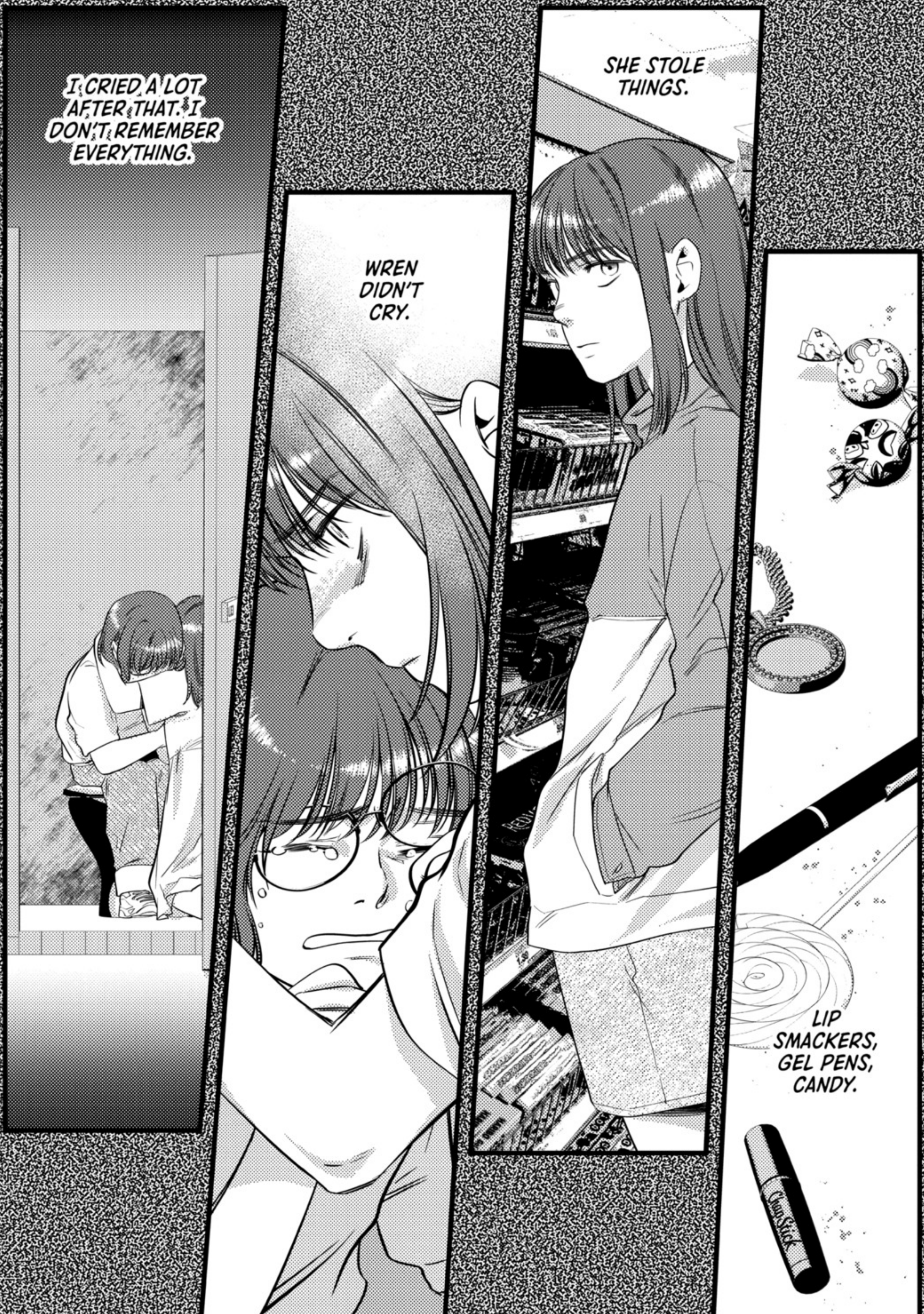

WE WERE A PACKAGE DEAL, EVEN AT DANCES.

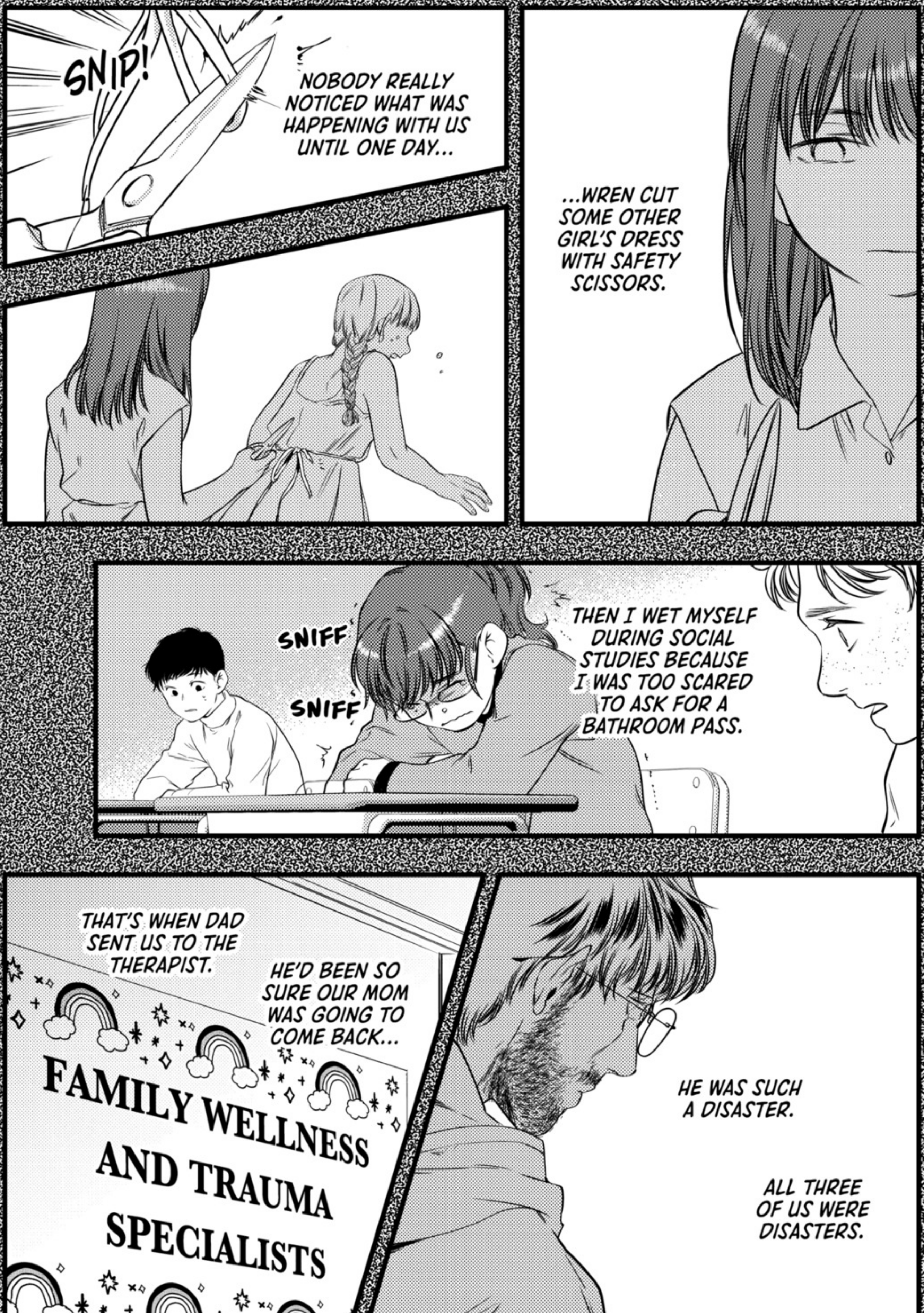

WE WERE A PACKAGE DEAL, PERIOD.

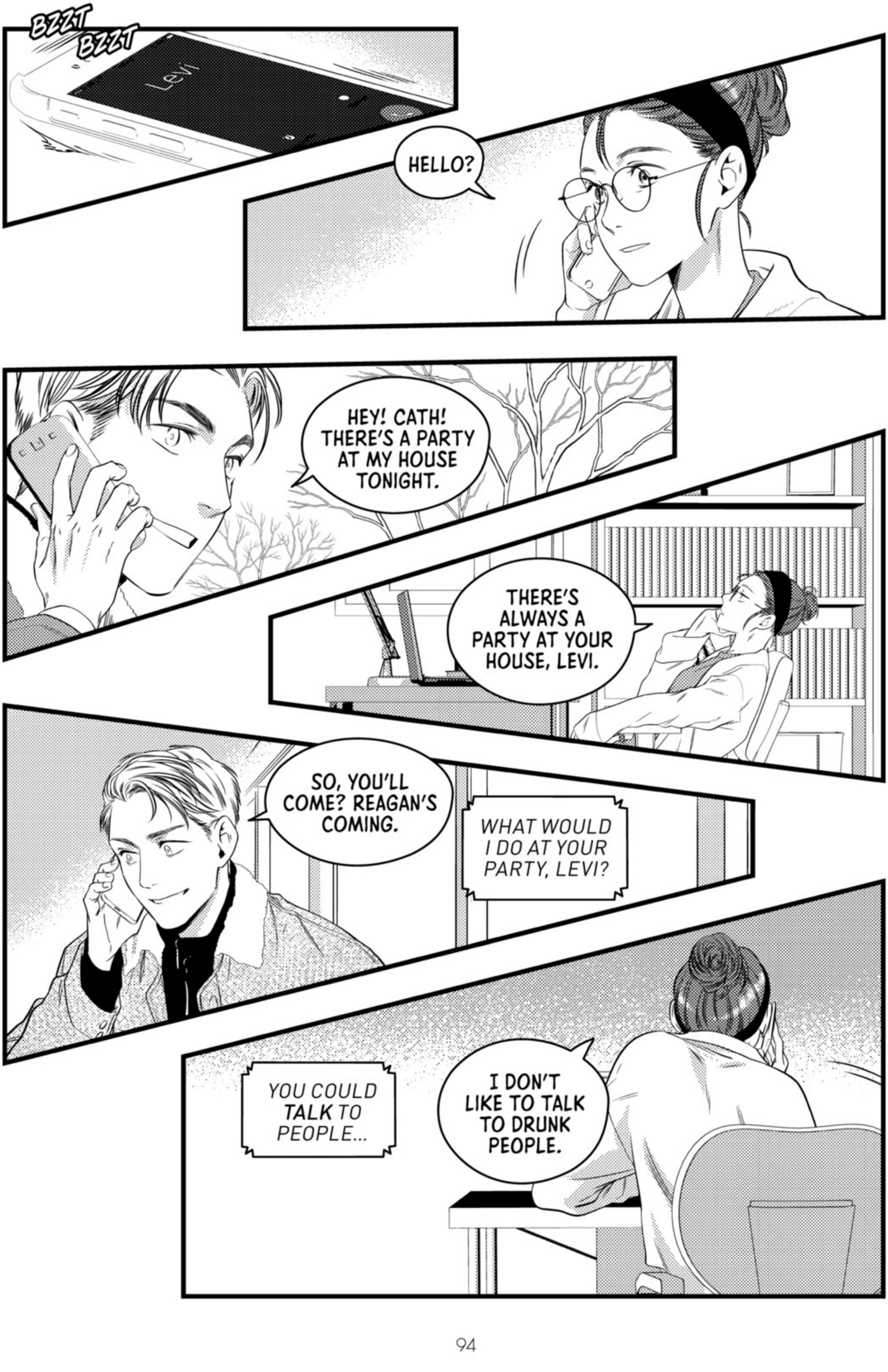

SINCE ALWAYS.

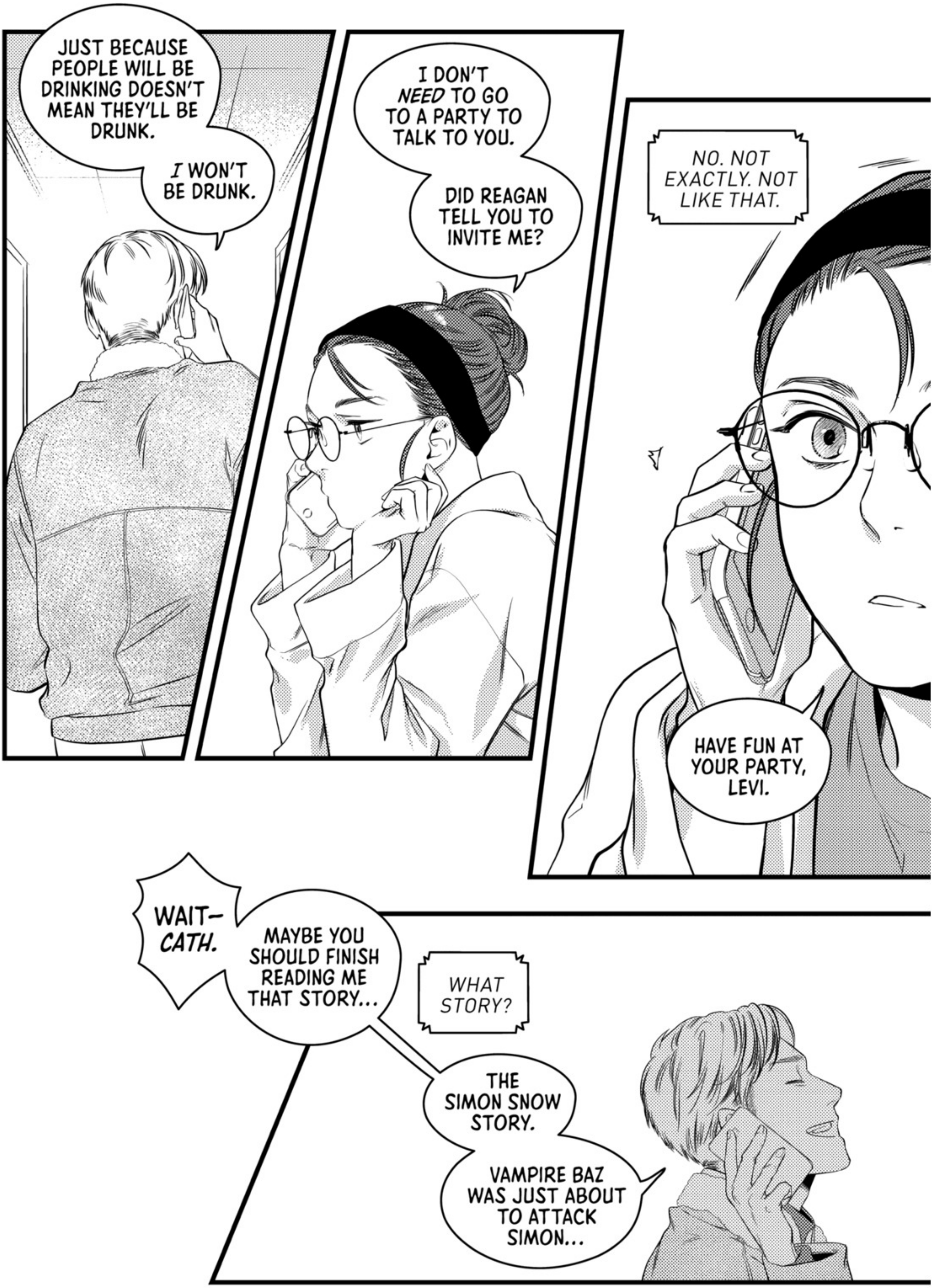

WE EVEN WENT TO THERAPY TOGETHER, AFTER OUR MOM LEFT.
WHICH SEEMS WEIRD, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING HOW DIFFERENTLY WE REACTED.
OUR MOM LEFT WHEN WE WERE EIGHT.
WREN AND I CAME HOME FROM SCHOOL ONE DAY, AND SHE AND DAD WERE FIGHTING.
I'M DONE, ART! I'M LIVING THE WRONG LIFE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, LAURA?
I MEAN— I'M DONE!

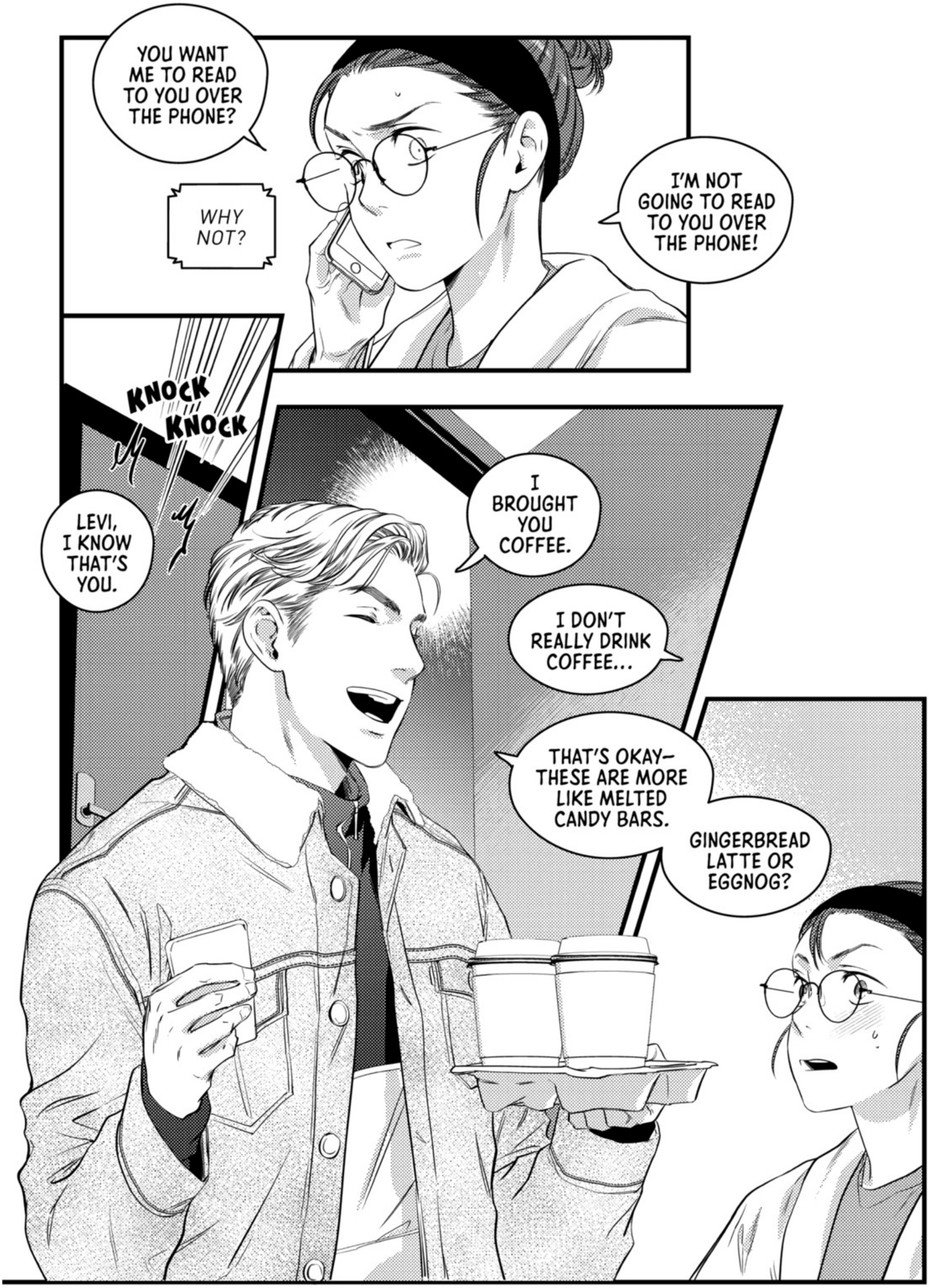

SHE LEFT FOR GOOD THAT NIGHT.
SHE SAID SHE JUST NEEDED SOME TIME TO REMEMBER WHO SHE REALLY WAS.
THAT DIDN'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO US...
SHE WAS **OUR MOM.**

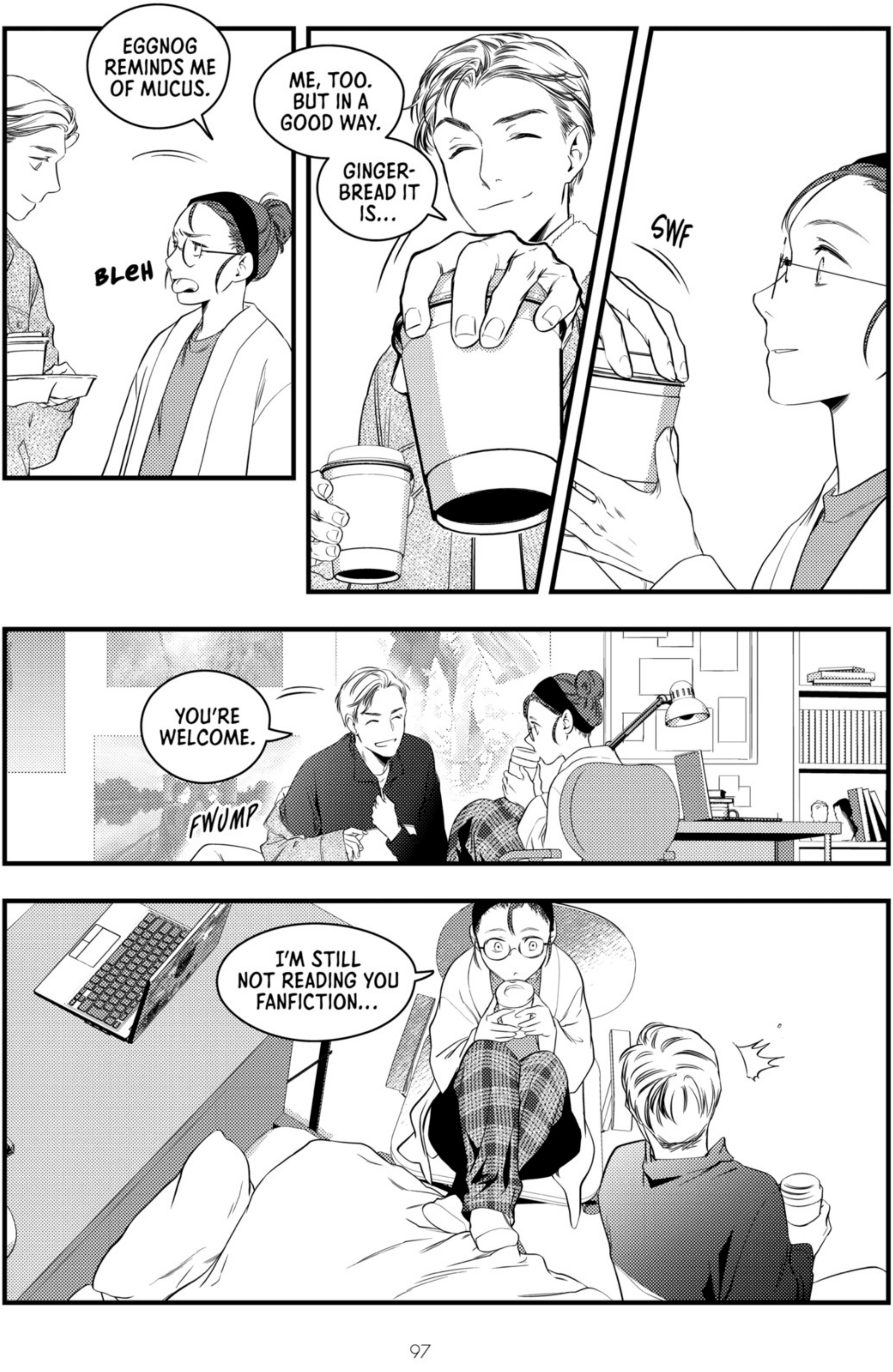

I CRIED A LOT AFTER THAT. I DON'T REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
WREN DIDN'T CRY.
SHE STOLE THINGS.
LIP SMACKERS, GEL PENS, CANDY.
ChapStick

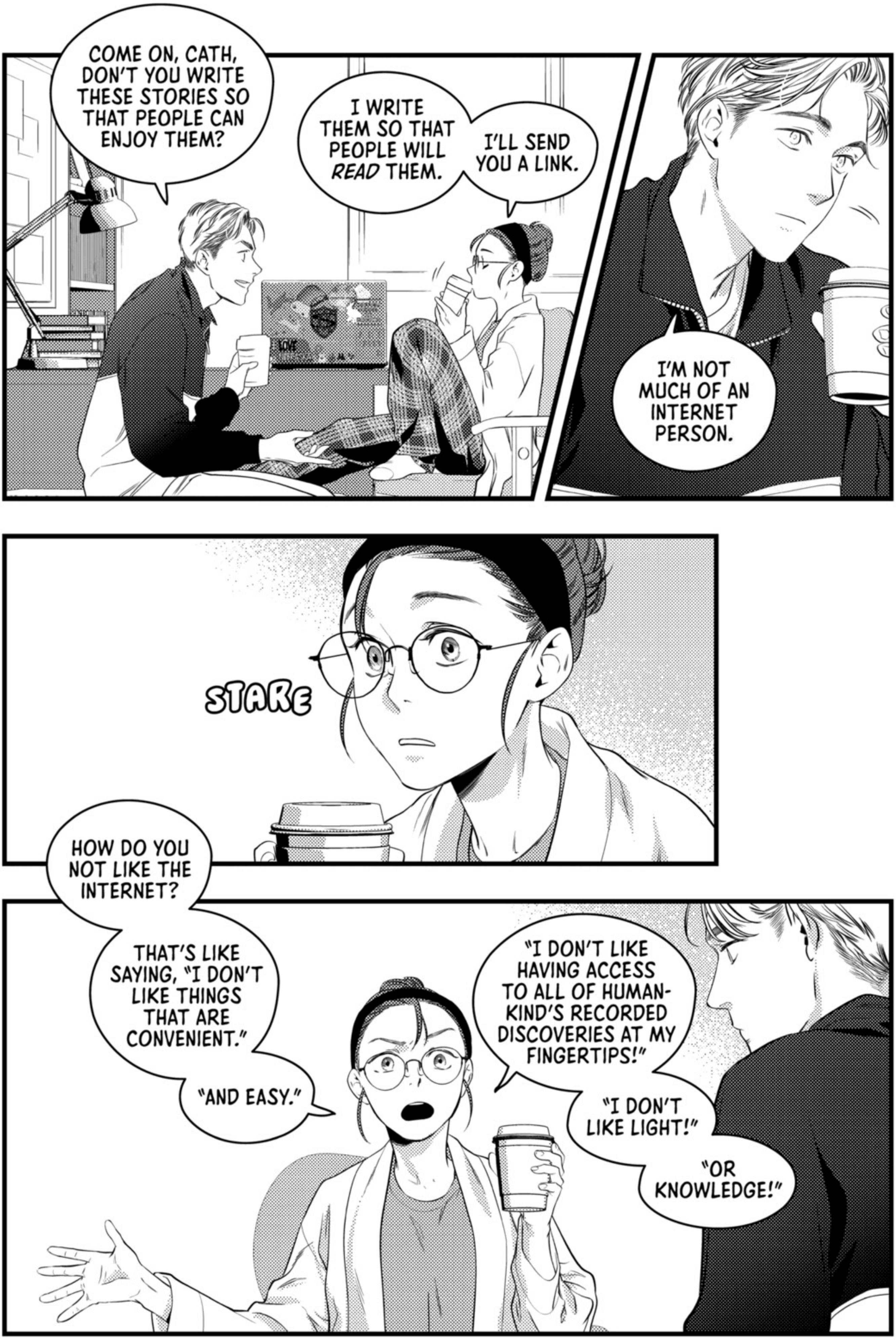

SNIP!
NOBODY REALLY NOTICED WHAT WAS HAPPENING WITH US UNTIL ONE DAY...
...WREN CUT SOME OTHER GIRL'S DRESS WITH SAFETY SCISSORS.
SNIFF
SNIFF
THEN I WET MYSELF DURING SOCIAL STUDIES BECAUSE I WAS TOO SCARED TO ASK FOR A BATHROOM PASS.
THAT'S WHEN DAD SENT US TO THE THERAPIST.
HE'D BEEN SO SURE OUR MOM WAS GOING TO COME BACK...
FAMILY WELLNESS AND TRAUMA SPECIALISTS
HE WAS SUCH A DISASTER.
ALL THREE OF US WERE DISASTERS.

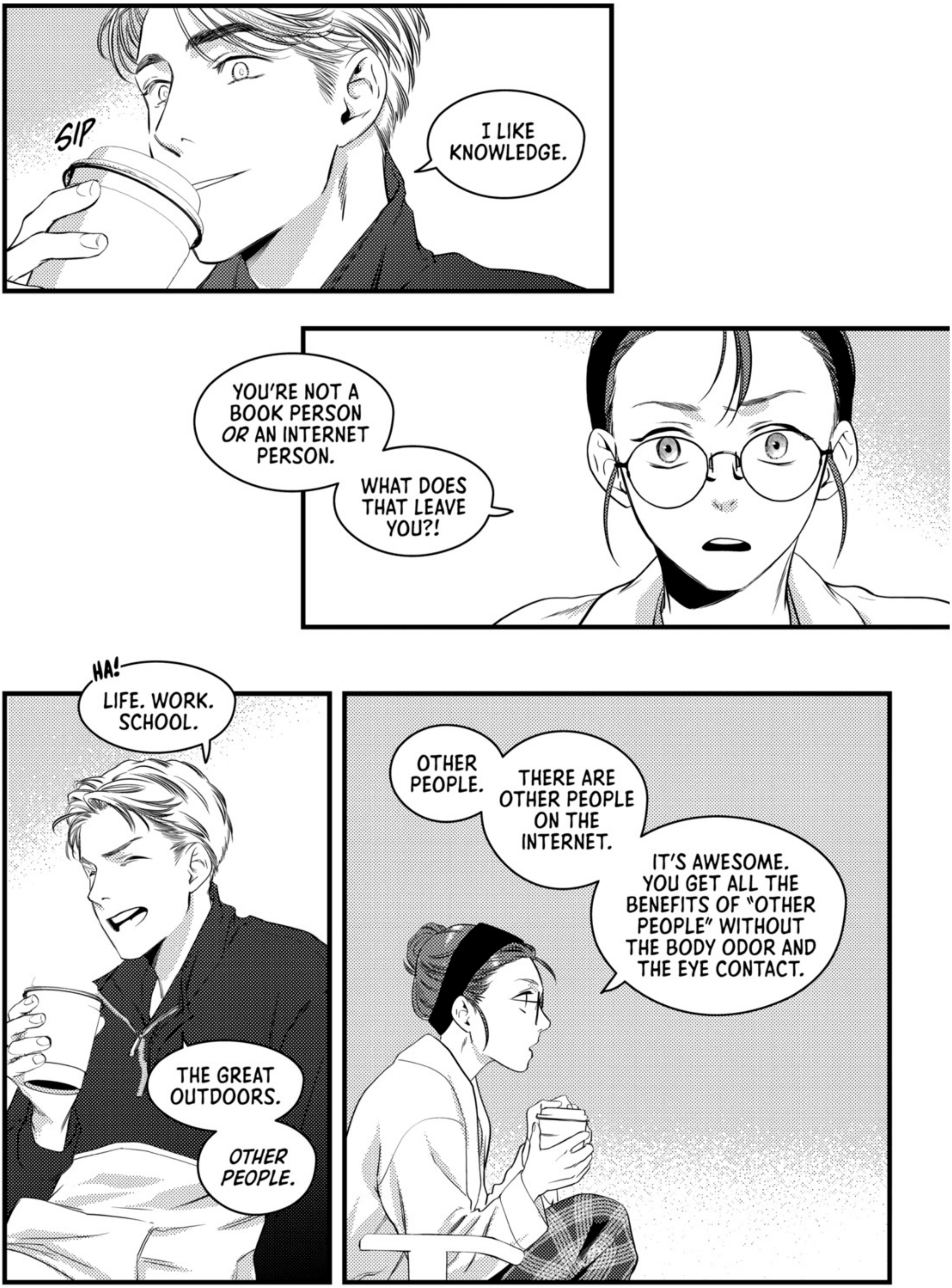

BZZT
BZZT
Levi
HELLO?
HEY! CATH! THERE’S A PARTY AT MY HOUSE TONIGHT.
THERE’S ALWAYS A PARTY AT YOUR HOUSE, LEVI.
SO, YOU’LL COME? REAGAN’S COMING.
WHAT WOULD I DO AT YOUR PARTY, LEVI?
*YOU COULD **TALK** TO PEOPLE…*
I DON’T LIKE TO TALK TO DRUNK PEOPLE.

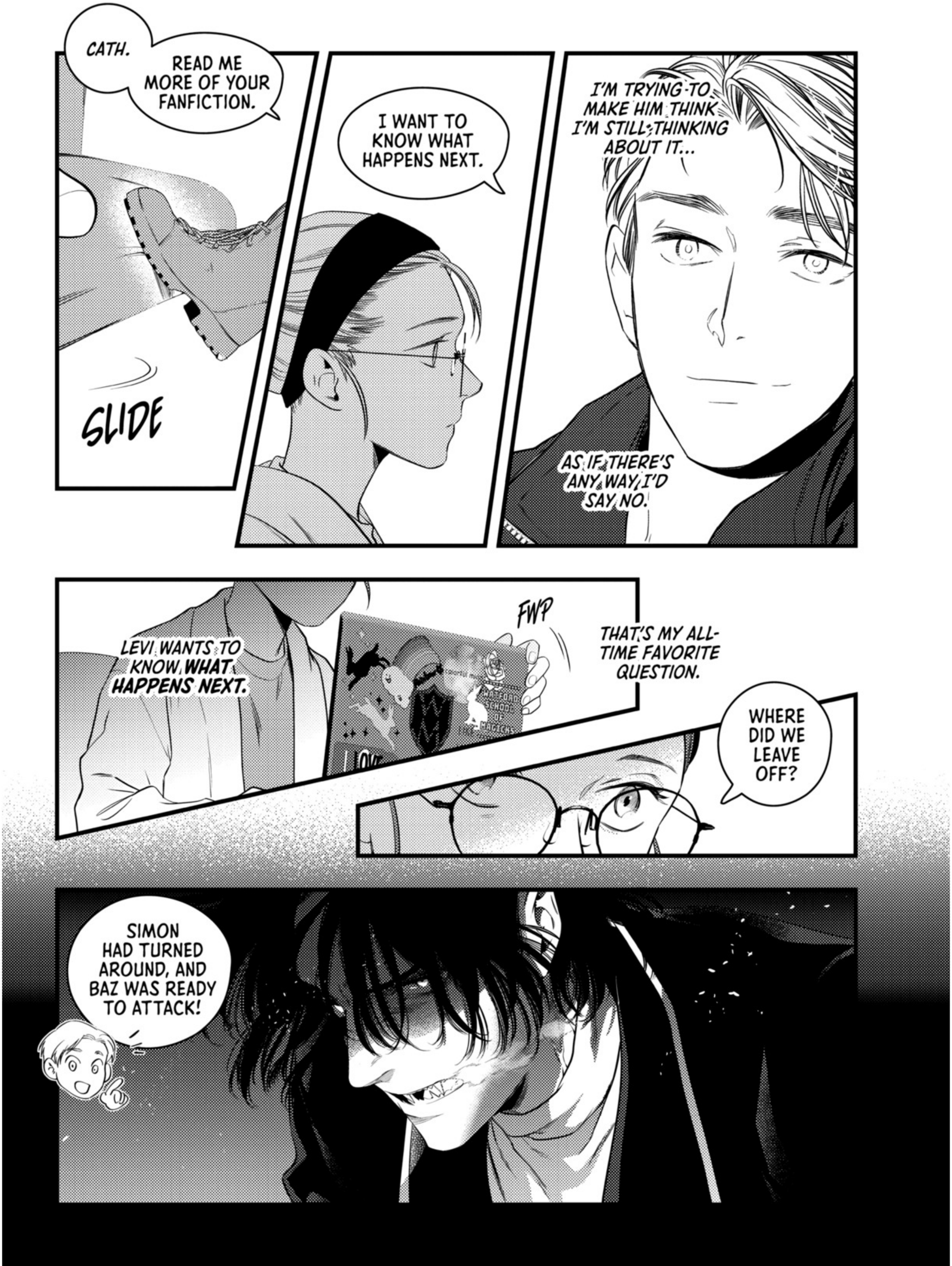

JUST BECAUSE PEOPLE WILL BE DRINKING DOESN'T MEAN THEY'LL BE DRUNK.
I WON'T BE DRUNK.
I DON'T *NEED* TO GO TO A PARTY TO TALK TO YOU.
DID REAGAN TELL YOU TO INVITE ME?
NO. NOT EXACTLY. NOT LIKE THAT.
HAVE FUN AT YOUR PARTY, LEVI.
WAIT– *CATH.*
MAYBE YOU SHOULD FINISH READING ME THAT STORY...
WHAT STORY?
THE SIMON SNOW STORY.
VAMPIRE BAZ WAS JUST ABOUT TO ATTACK SIMON...

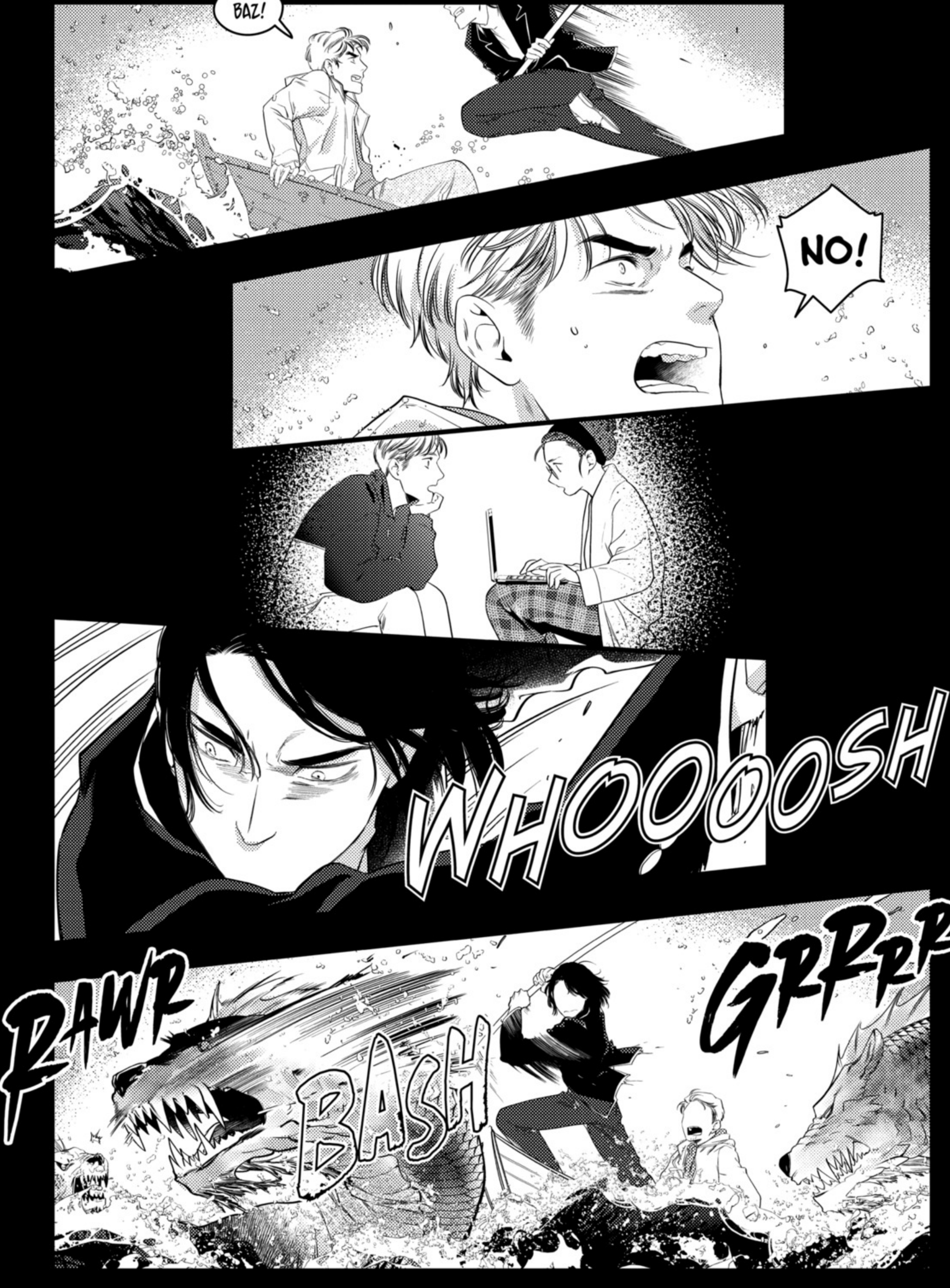

YOU WANT ME TO READ TO YOU OVER THE PHONE?
WHY NOT?
I'M NOT GOING TO READ TO YOU OVER THE PHONE!
KNOCK KNOCK
LEVI, I KNOW THAT'S YOU.
I BROUGHT YOU COFFEE.
I DON'T REALLY DRINK COFFEE...
THAT'S OKAY— THESE ARE MORE LIKE MELTED CANDY BARS.
GINGERBREAD LATTE OR EGGNOG?

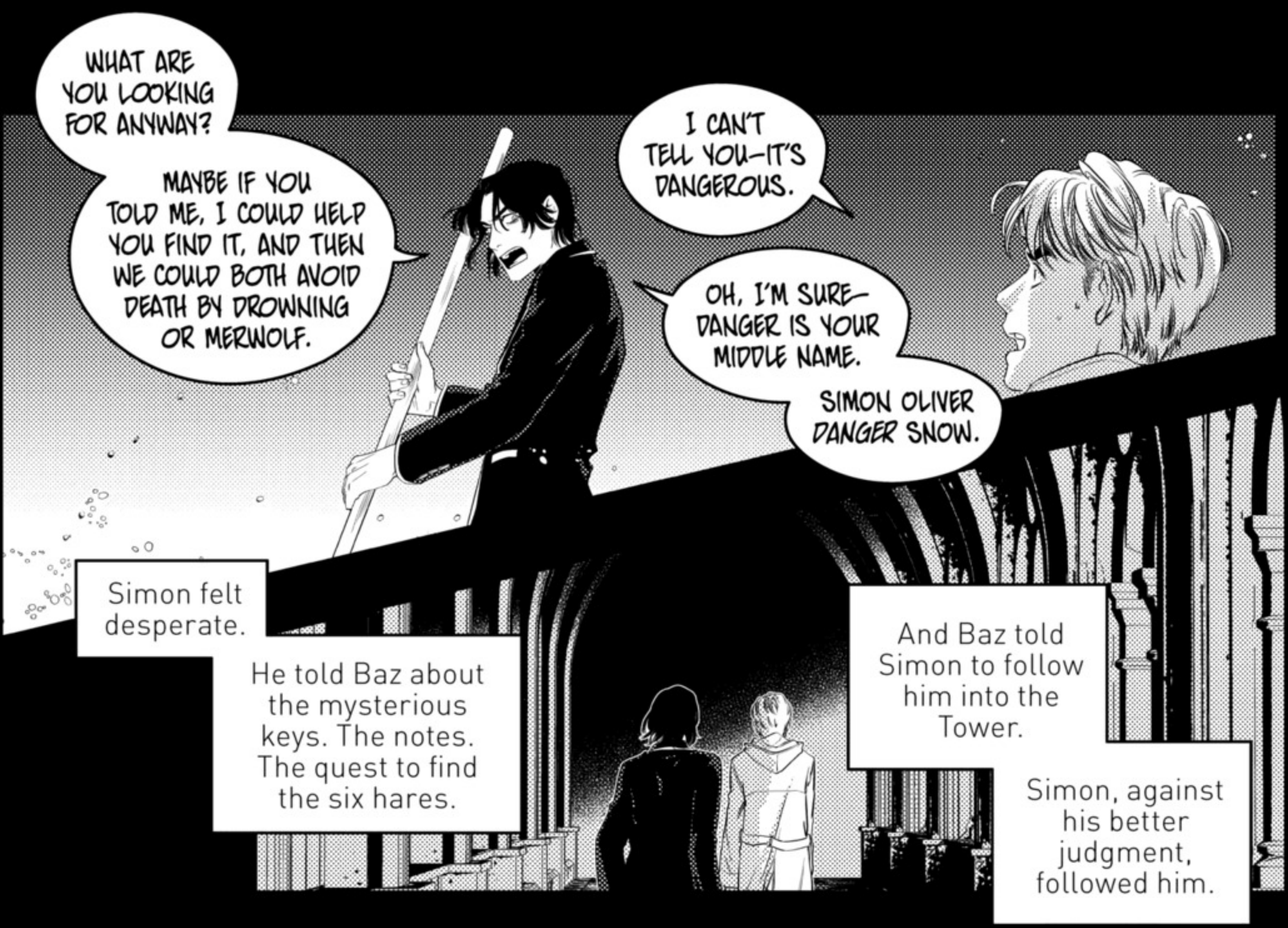

EGGNOG REMINDS ME OF MUCUS.
BLEH
ME, TOO. BUT IN A GOOD WAY.
GINGER-BREAD IT IS...
SWF
YOU'RE WELCOME.
FWUMP
I'M STILL NOT READING YOU FANFICTION...


COME ON, CATH, DON'T YOU WRITE THESE STORIES SO THAT PEOPLE CAN ENJOY THEM?
I WRITE THEM SO THAT PEOPLE WILL *READ* THEM.
I'LL SEND YOU A LINK.
I'M NOT MUCH OF AN INTERNET PERSON.
STARE
HOW DO YOU NOT LIKE THE INTERNET?
THAT'S LIKE SAYING, "I DON'T LIKE THINGS THAT ARE CONVENIENT."
"AND EASY."
"I DON'T LIKE HAVING ACCESS TO ALL OF HUMANKIND'S RECORDED DISCOVERIES AT MY FINGERTIPS!"
"I DON'T LIKE LIGHT!"
"OR KNOWLEDGE!"


SIP
I LIKE KNOWLEDGE.
YOU'RE NOT A BOOK PERSON *OR* AN INTERNET PERSON.
WHAT DOES THAT LEAVE YOU?!
HA!
LIFE. WORK. SCHOOL.
THE GREAT OUTDOORS.
OTHER PEOPLE.
OTHER PEOPLE.
THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE ON THE INTERNET.
IT'S AWESOME. YOU GET ALL THE BENEFITS OF "OTHER PEOPLE" WITHOUT THE BODY ODOR AND THE EYE CONTACT.


CATH.
READ ME MORE OF YOUR FANFICTION.
SLIDE
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
I'M TRYING TO MAKE HIM THINK I'M STILL THINKING ABOUT IT...
AS IF THERE'S ANY WAY I'D SAY NO.
LEVI WANTS TO KNOW **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.**
FWP
WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
THAT'S MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE QUESTION.
WHERE DID WE LEAVE OFF?
SIMON HAD TURNED AROUND, AND BAZ WAS READY TO ATTACK!


BAZ!
NO!
WHOOOOOSH
RAWR
BASH
GRRrrr

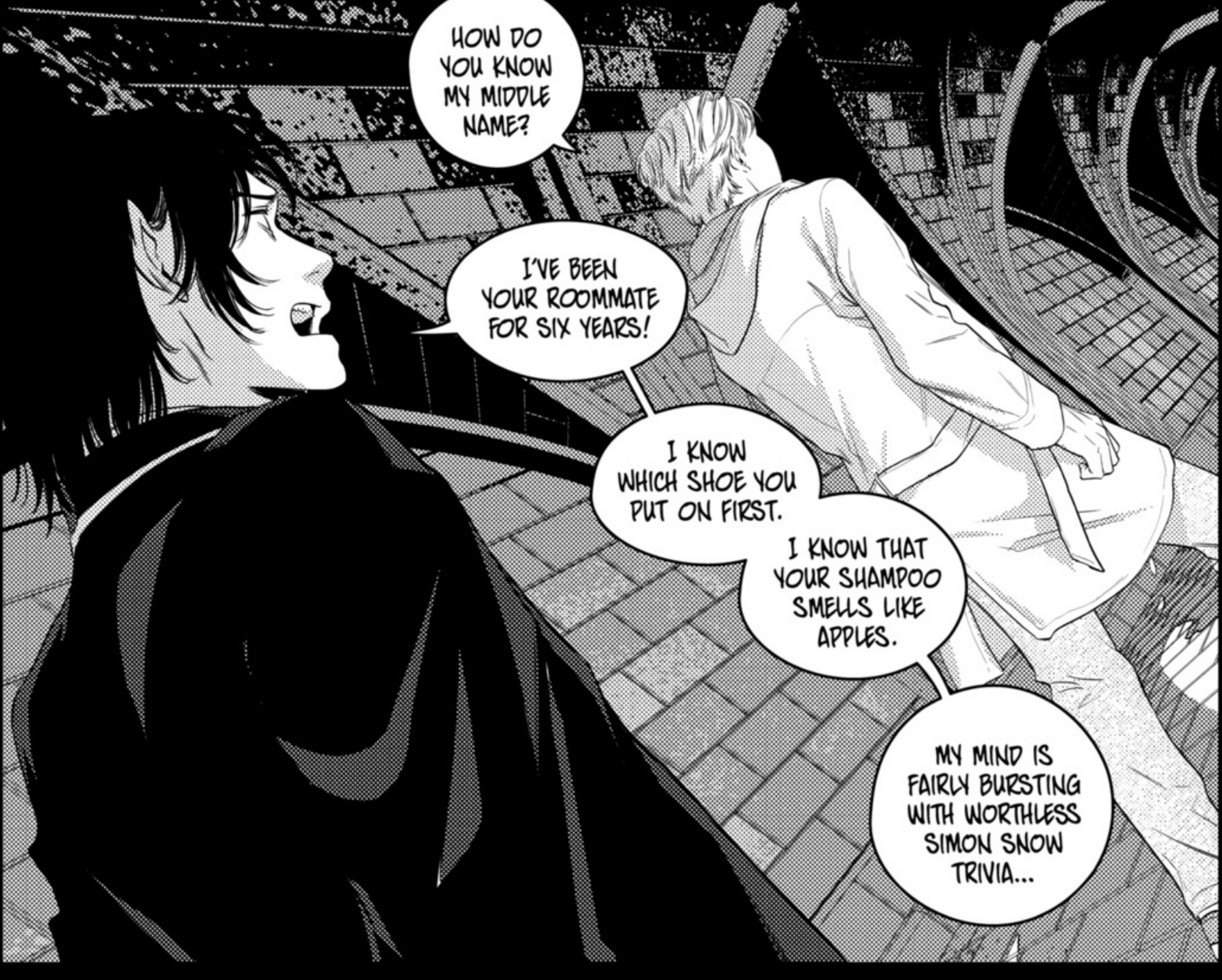

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ANYWAY?
MAYBE IF YOU TOLD ME, I COULD HELP YOU FIND IT, AND THEN WE COULD BOTH AVOID DEATH BY DROWNING OR MERWOLF.
I CAN'T TELL YOU—IT'S DANGEROUS.
OH, I'M SURE—DANGER IS YOUR MIDDLE NAME.
SIMON OLIVER DANGER SNOW.

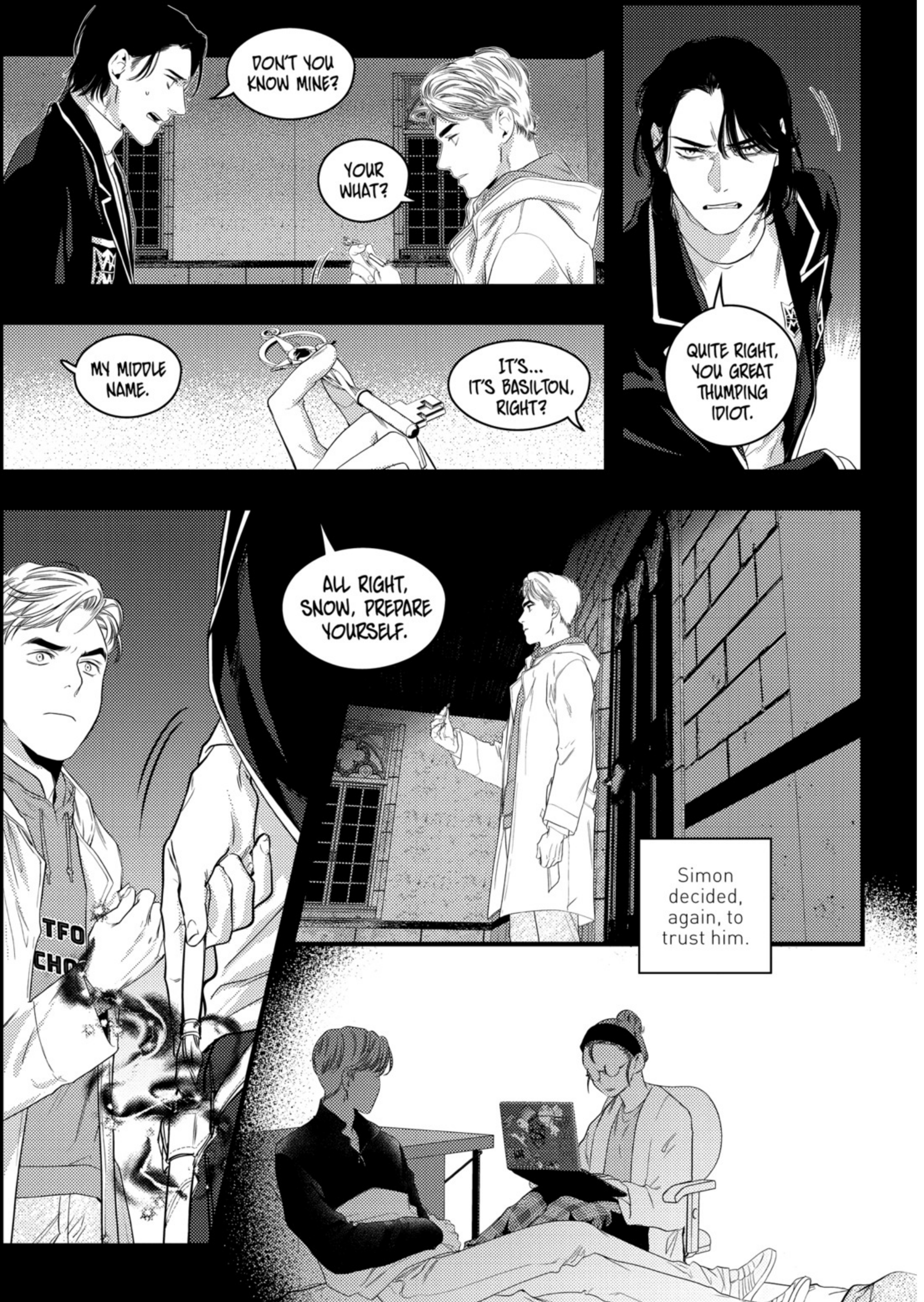
Simon felt desperate.

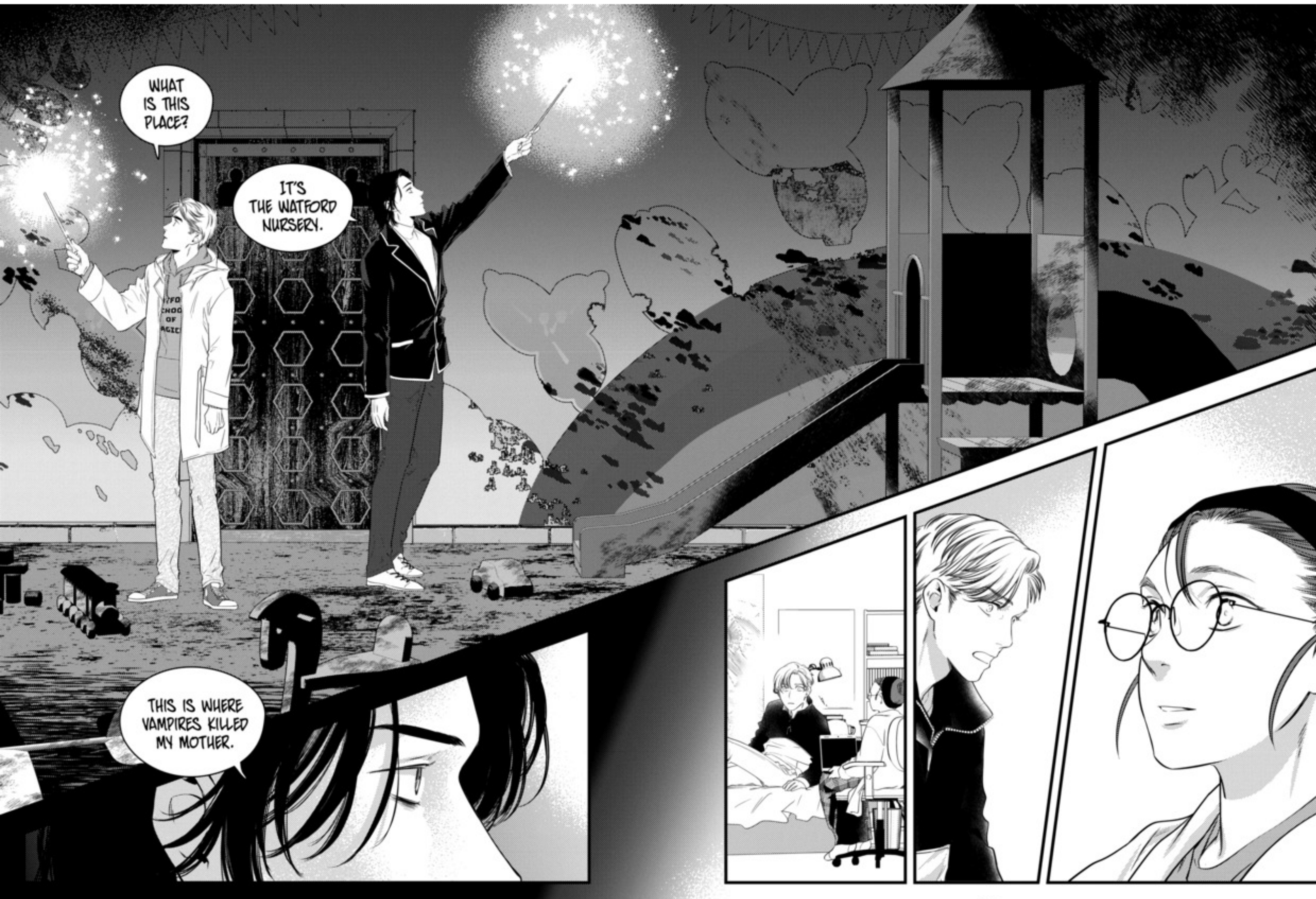
He told Baz about the mysterious keys. The notes. The quest to find the six hares.

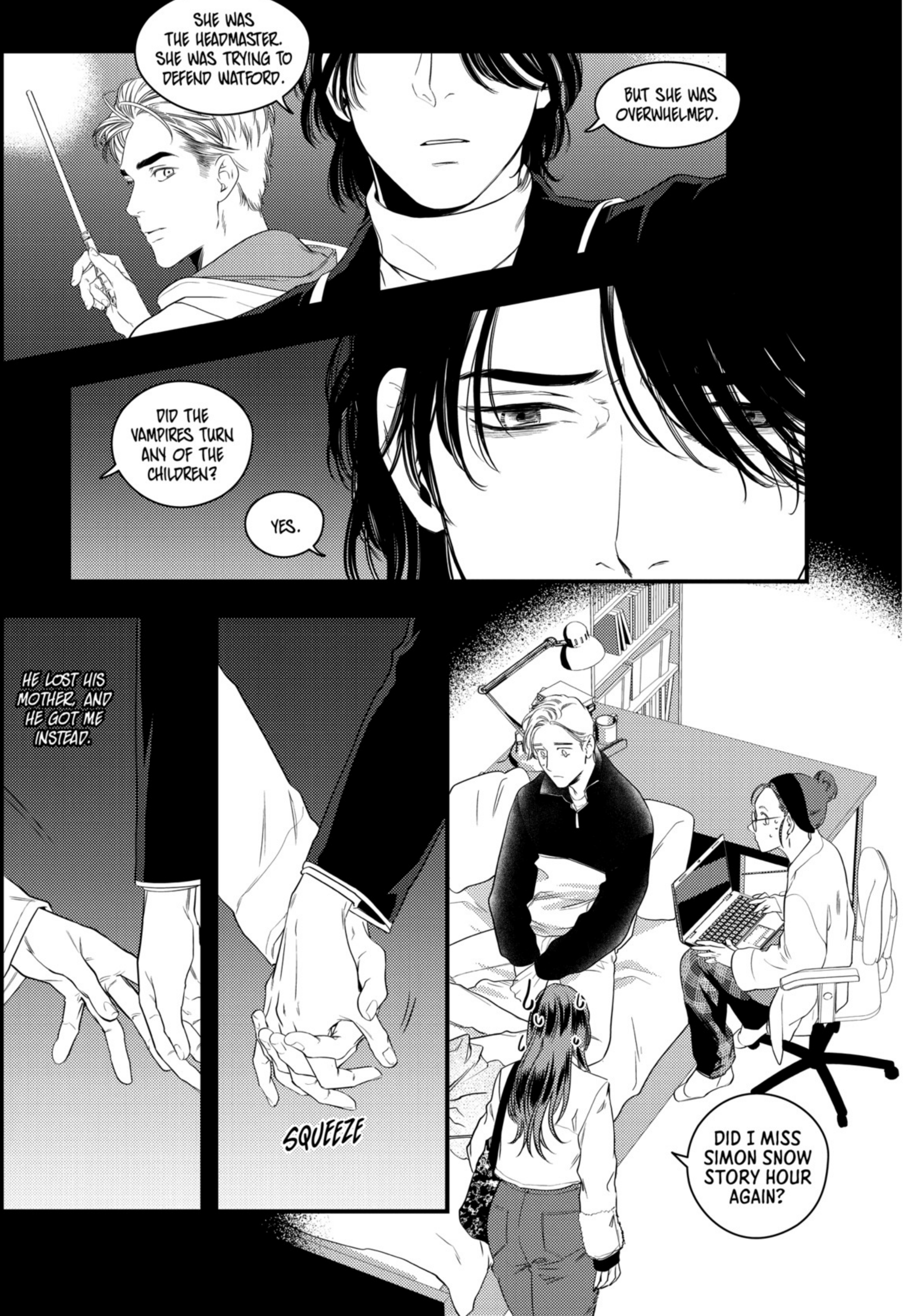
And Baz told Simon to follow him into the Tower.

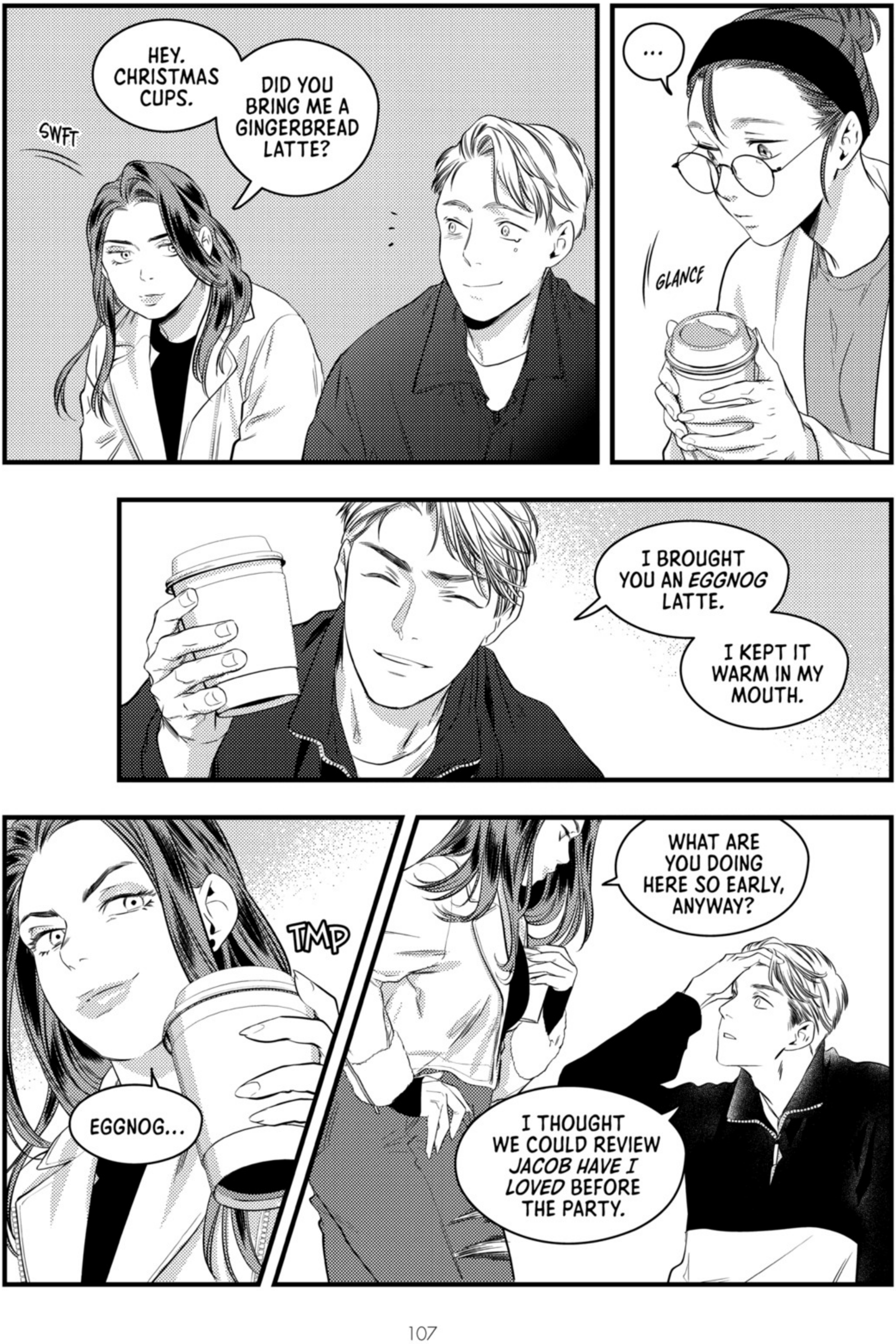
Simon, against his better judgment, followed him.

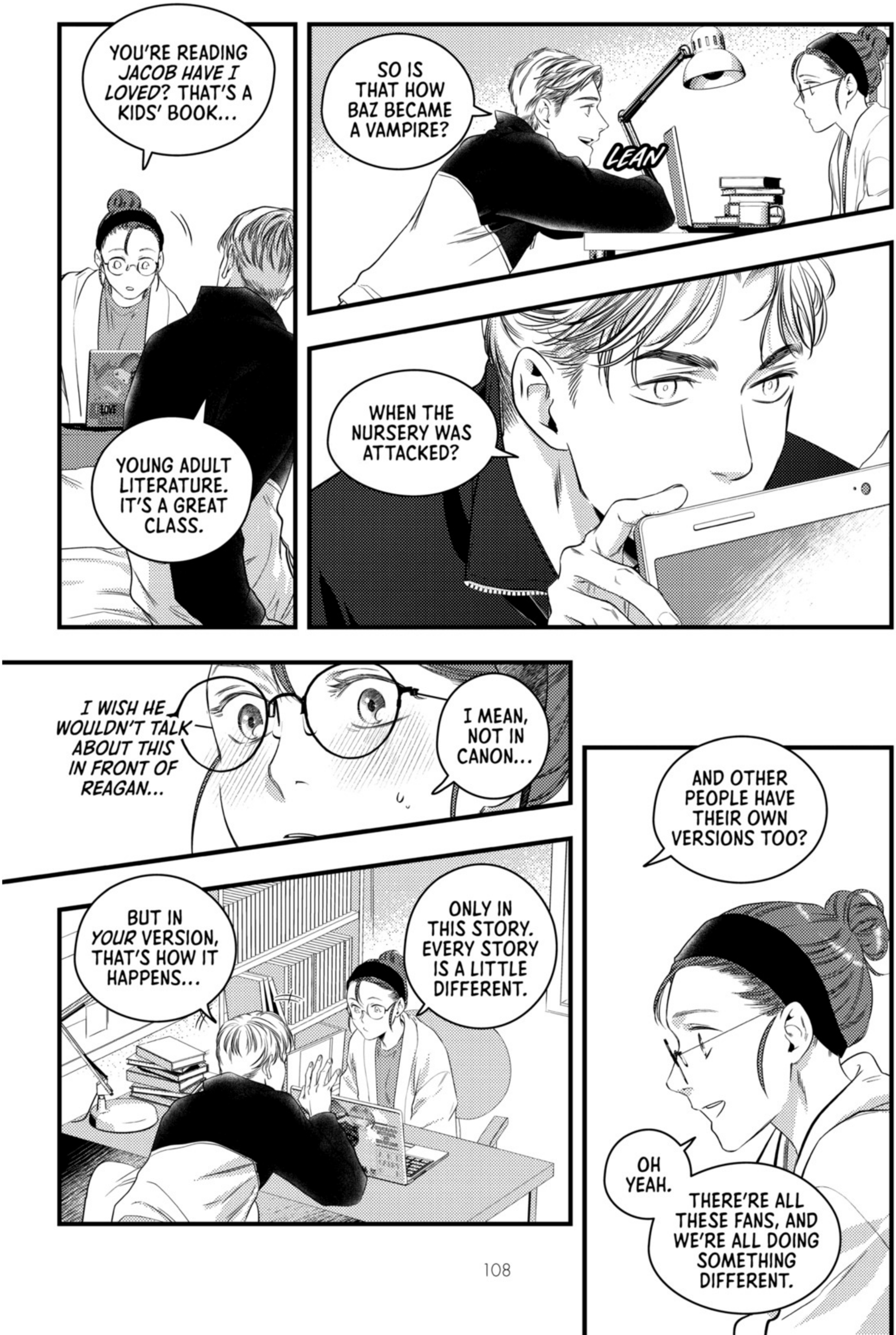

HOW DO YOU KNOW MY MIDDLE NAME?
I'VE BEEN YOUR ROOMMATE FOR SIX YEARS!
I KNOW WHICH SHOE YOU PUT ON FIRST.
I KNOW THAT YOUR SHAMPOO SMELLS LIKE APPLES.
MY MIND IS FAIRLY BURSTING WITH WORTHLESS SIMON SNOW TRIVIA...

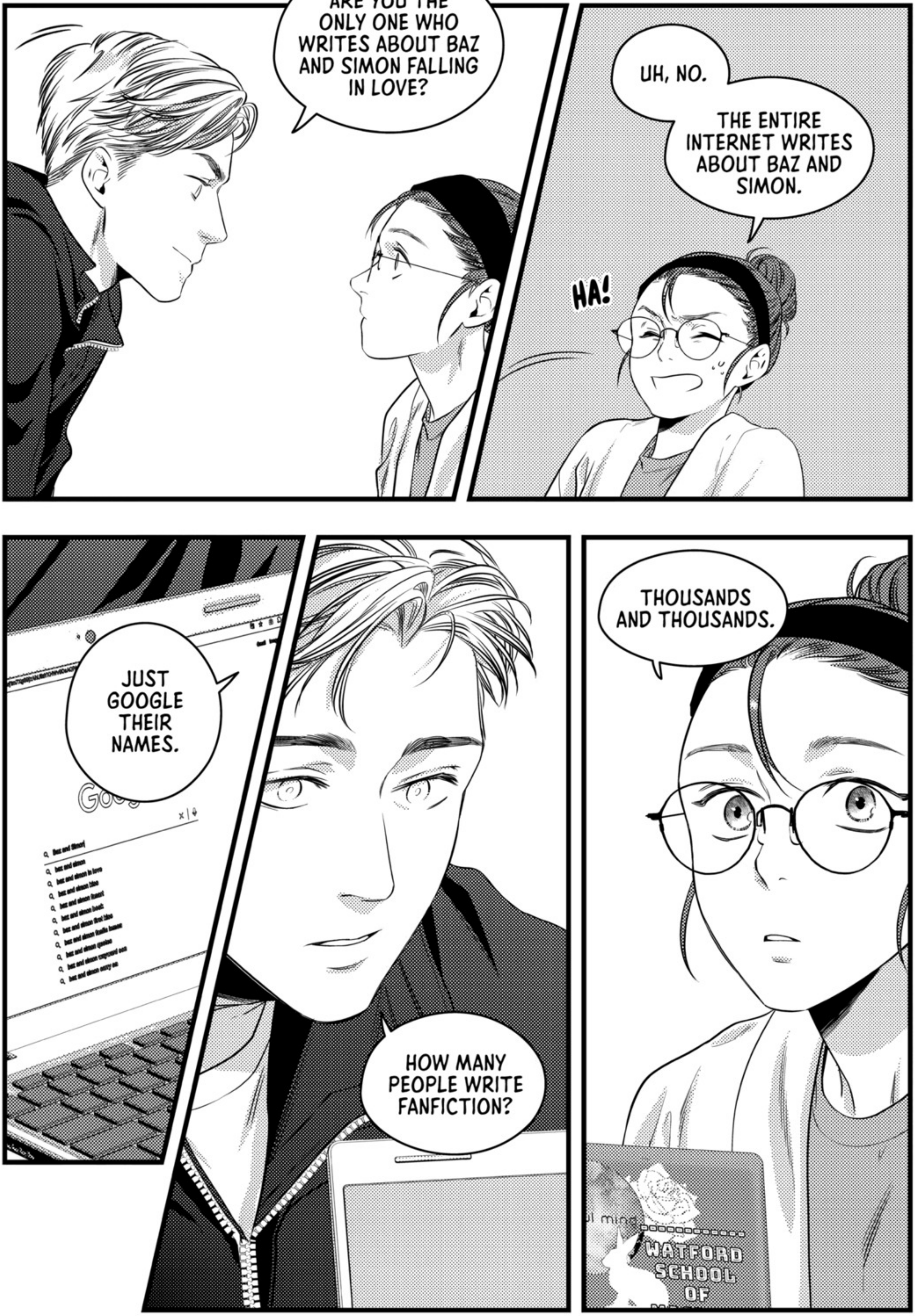

DON'T YOU KNOW MINE?
YOUR WHAT?
MY MIDDLE NAME.
IT'S... IT'S BASILTON, RIGHT?
QUITE RIGHT, YOU GREAT THUMPING IDIOT.
ALL RIGHT, SNOW, PREPARE YOURSELF.
TFO
CHO
Simon decided, again, to trust him.


WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
IT'S THE WATFORD NURSERY.
THIS IS WHERE VAMPIRES KILLED MY MOTHER.

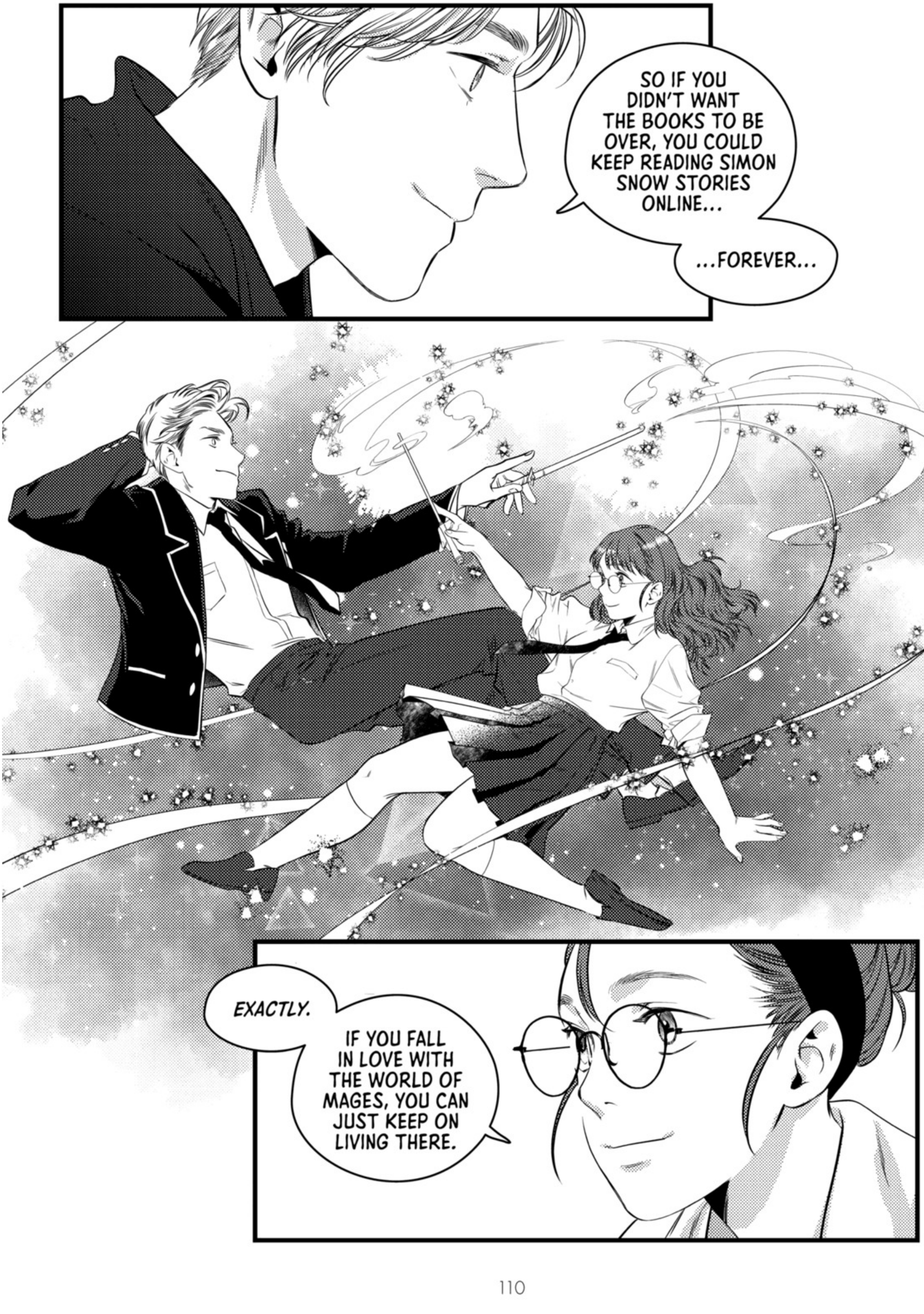

SHE WAS THE HEADMASTER. SHE WAS TRYING TO DEFEND WATFORD.
BUT SHE WAS OVERWHELMED.
DID THE VAMPIRES TURN ANY OF THE CHILDREN?
YES.
HE LOST HIS MOTHER, AND HE GOT ME INSTEAD.
SQUEEZE
DID I MISS SIMON SNOW STORY HOUR AGAIN?

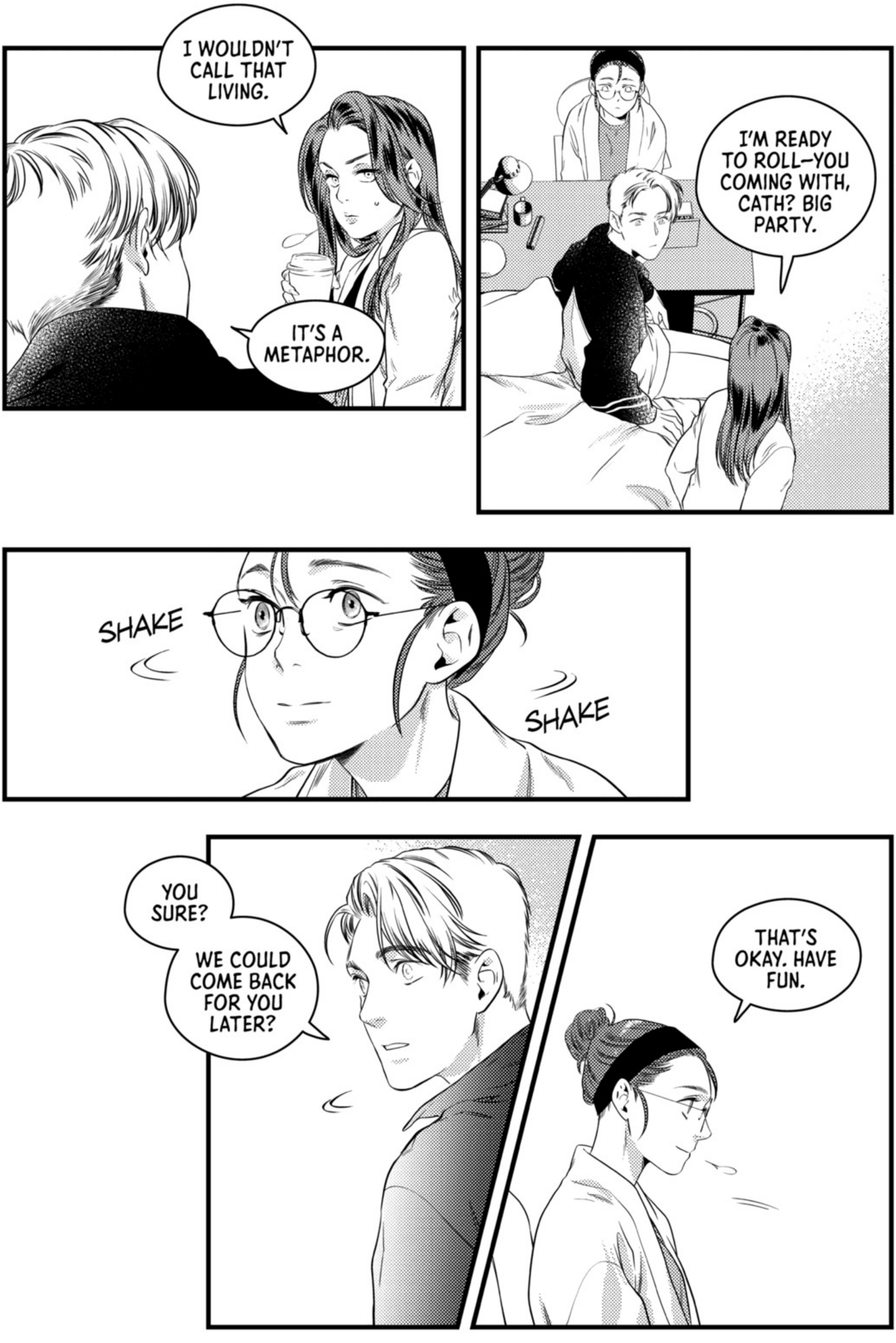

SWFT
HEY. CHRISTMAS CUPS.
DID YOU BRING ME A GINGERBREAD LATTE?
...
GLANCE
I BROUGHT YOU AN *EGGNOG* LATTE.
I KEPT IT WARM IN MY MOUTH.
TMP
EGGNOG...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE SO EARLY, ANYWAY?
I THOUGHT WE COULD REVIEW *JACOB HAVE I LOVED* BEFORE THE PARTY.


YOU'RE READING *JACOB HAVE I LOVED*? THAT'S A KIDS' BOOK...
LOVE
YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE. IT'S A GREAT CLASS.
SO IS THAT HOW BAZ BECAME A VAMPIRE?
LEAN
WHEN THE NURSERY WAS ATTACKED?
I WISH HE WOULDN'T TALK ABOUT THIS IN FRONT OF REAGAN...
I MEAN, NOT IN CANON...
BUT IN *YOUR* VERSION, THAT'S HOW IT HAPPENS...
ONLY IN THIS STORY. EVERY STORY IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
AND OTHER PEOPLE HAVE THEIR OWN VERSIONS TOO?
OH YEAH.
THERE'RE ALL THESE FANS, AND WE'RE ALL DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT.



ARE YOU THE ONLY ONE WHO WRITES ABOUT BAZ AND SIMON FALLING IN LOVE?
UH, NO.
THE ENTIRE INTERNET WRITES ABOUT BAZ AND SIMON.
HA!
JUST GOOGLE THEIR NAMES.
HOW MANY PEOPLE WRITE FANFICTION?
THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS.
WATFORD SCHOOL OF


SO IF YOU DIDN'T WANT THE BOOKS TO BE OVER, YOU COULD KEEP READING SIMON SNOW STORIES ONLINE...
...FOREVER...
EXACTLY.
IF YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD OF MAGES, YOU CAN JUST KEEP ON LIVING THERE.


I WOULDN'T CALL THAT LIVING.
IT'S A METAPHOR.
I'M READY TO ROLL—YOU COMING WITH, CATH? BIG PARTY.
SHAKE
SHAKE
YOU SURE?
WE COULD COME BACK FOR YOU LATER?
THAT'S OKAY. HAVE FUN.

From *Simon Snow and the Third Gate*

Chapter 21

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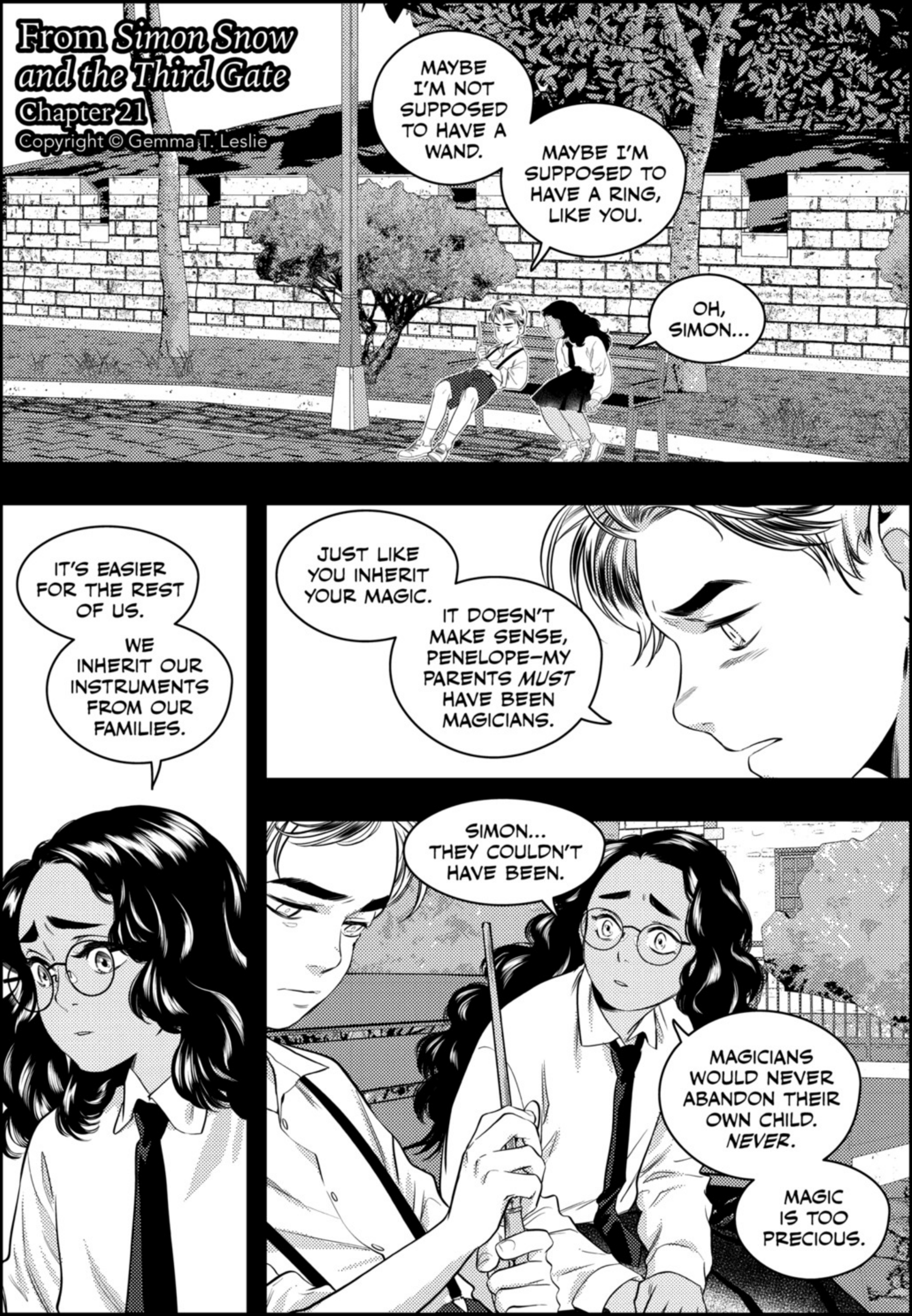
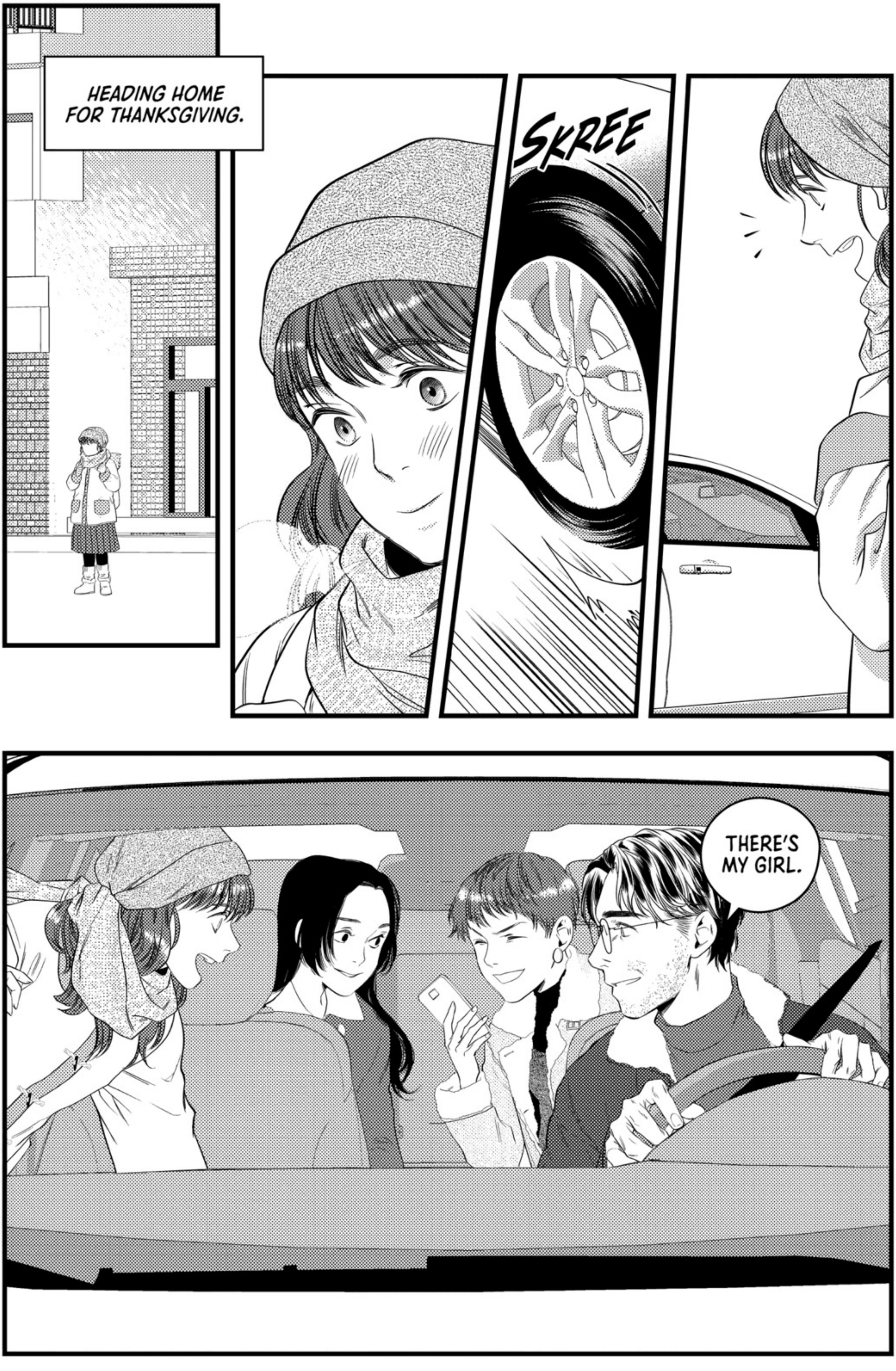
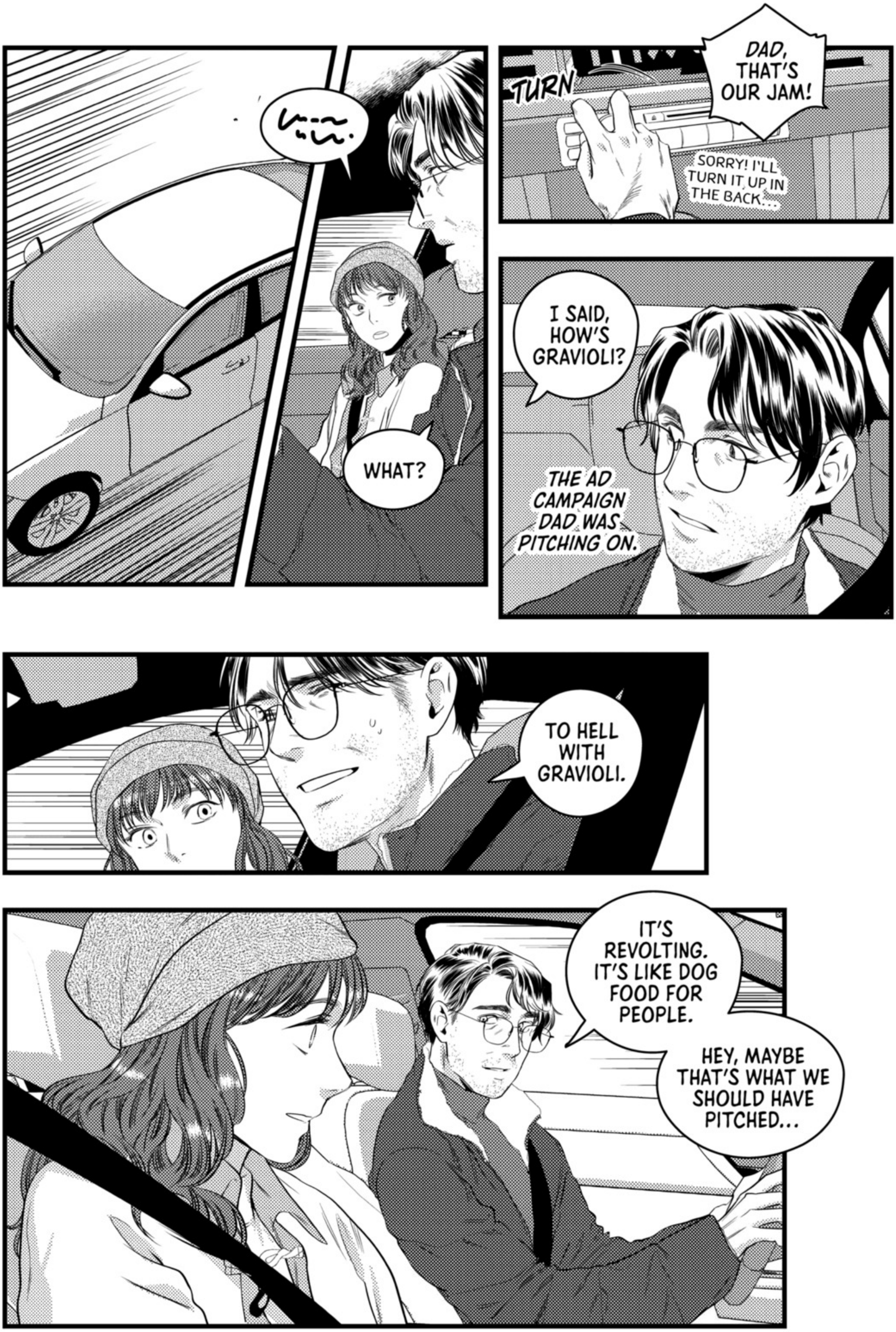
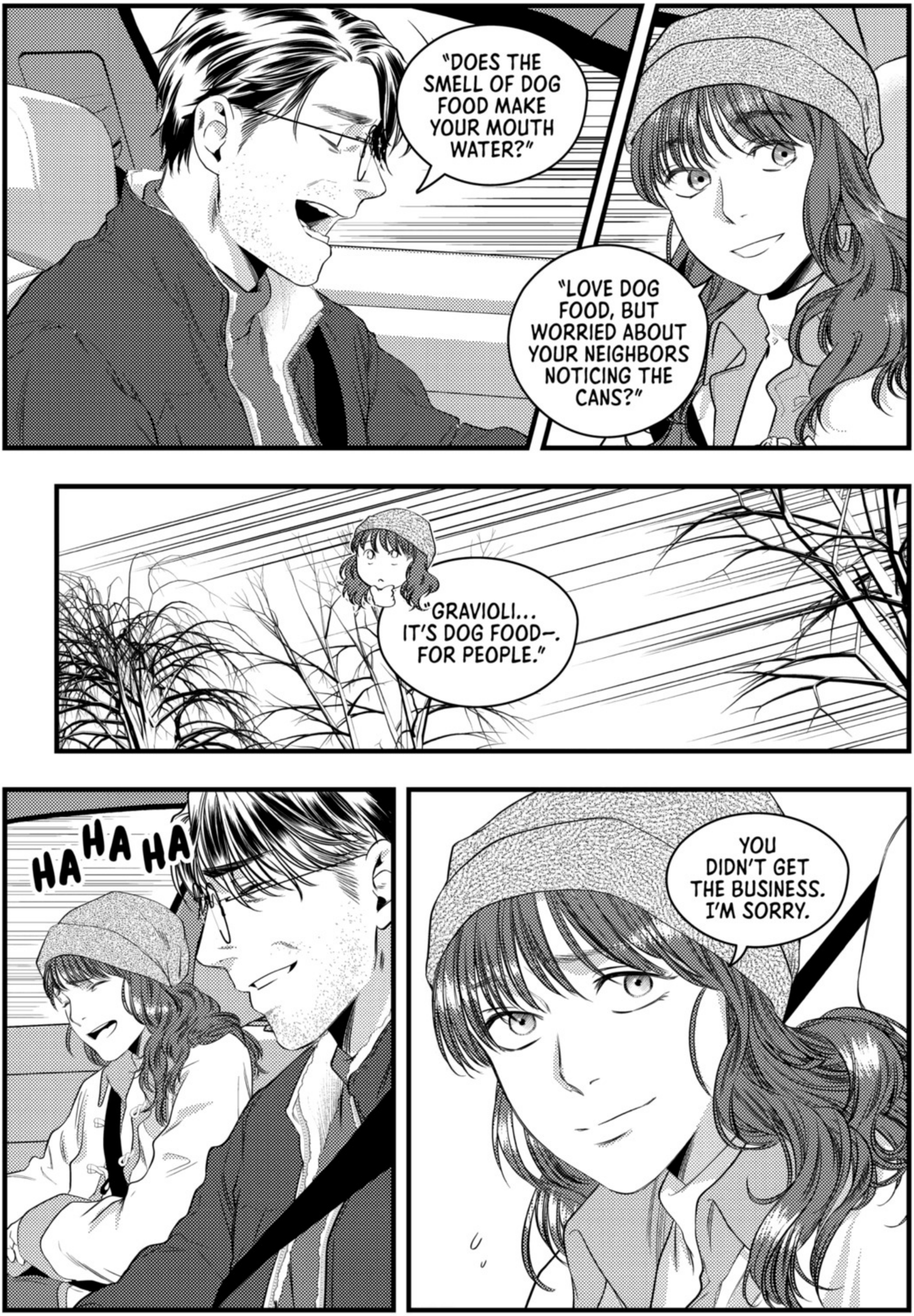
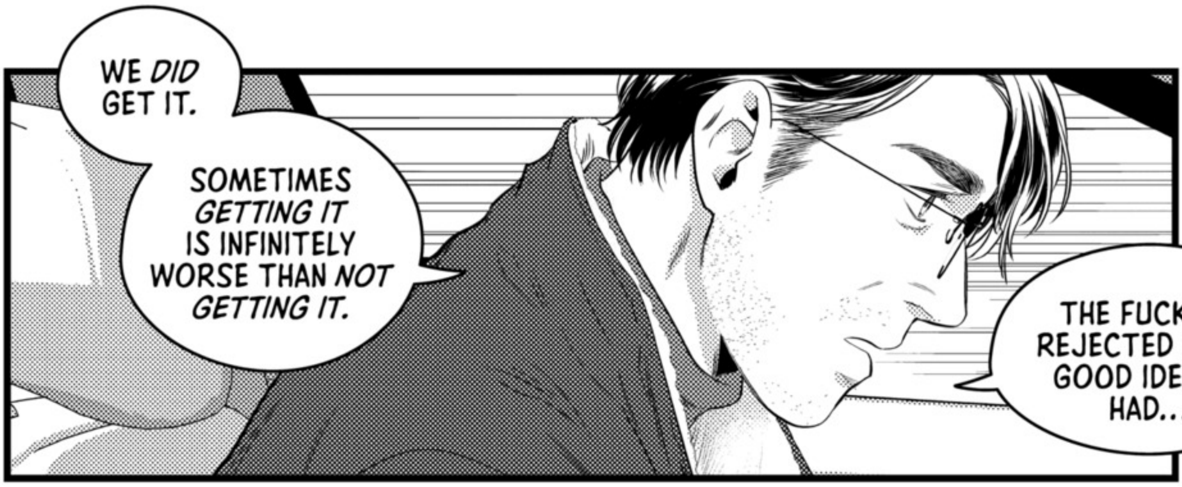
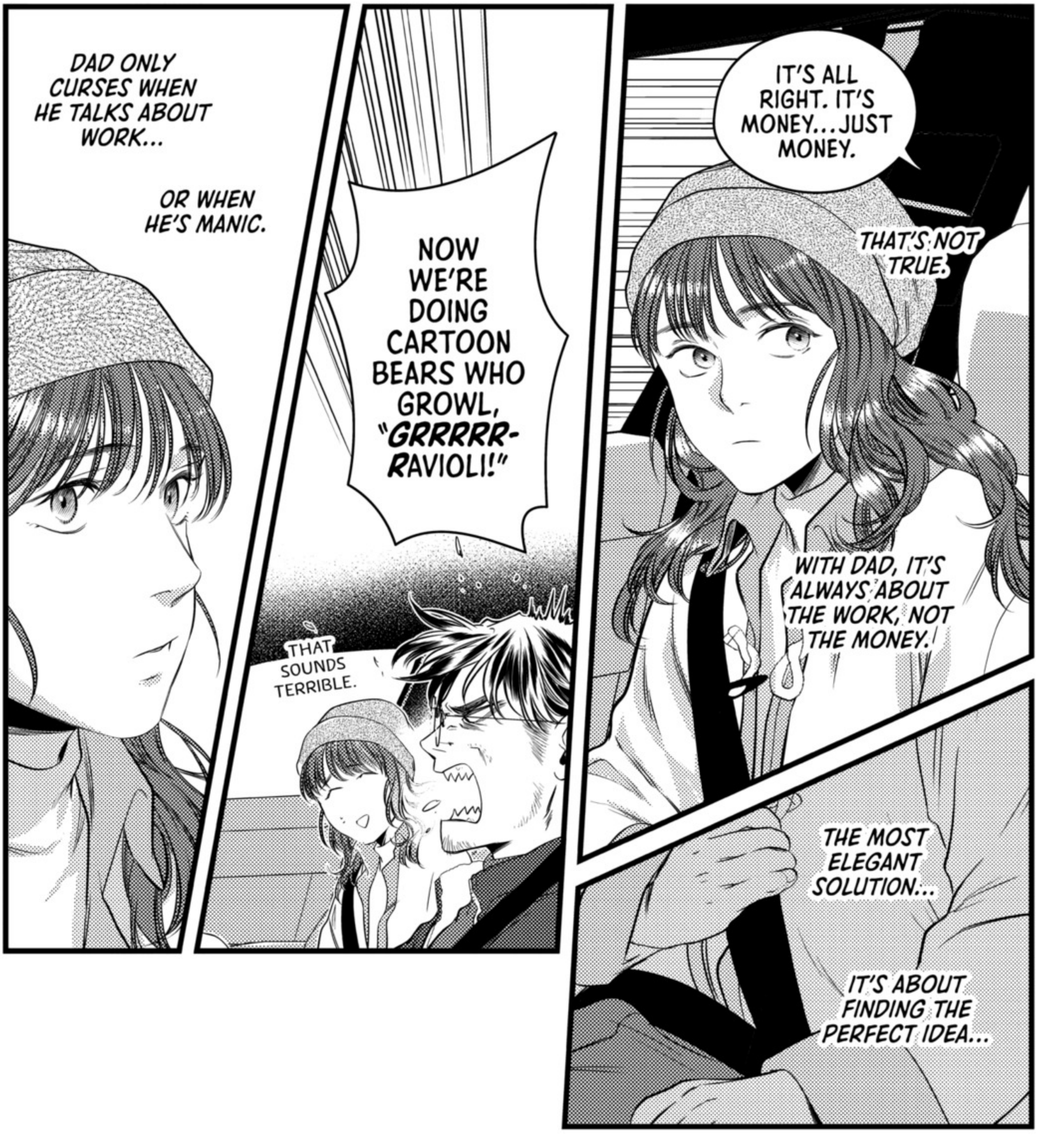

MAYBE I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE A WAND.
MAYBE I'M SUPPOSED TO HAVE A RING, LIKE YOU.
OH, SIMON...
IT'S EASIER FOR THE REST OF US.
WE INHERIT OUR INSTRUMENTS FROM OUR FAMILIES.
JUST LIKE YOU INHERIT YOUR MAGIC.
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, PENELOPE—MY PARENTS *MUST* HAVE BEEN MAGICIANS.
SIMON... THEY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN.
MAGICIANS WOULD NEVER ABANDON THEIR OWN CHILD. *NEVER*.
MAGIC IS TOO PRECIOUS.

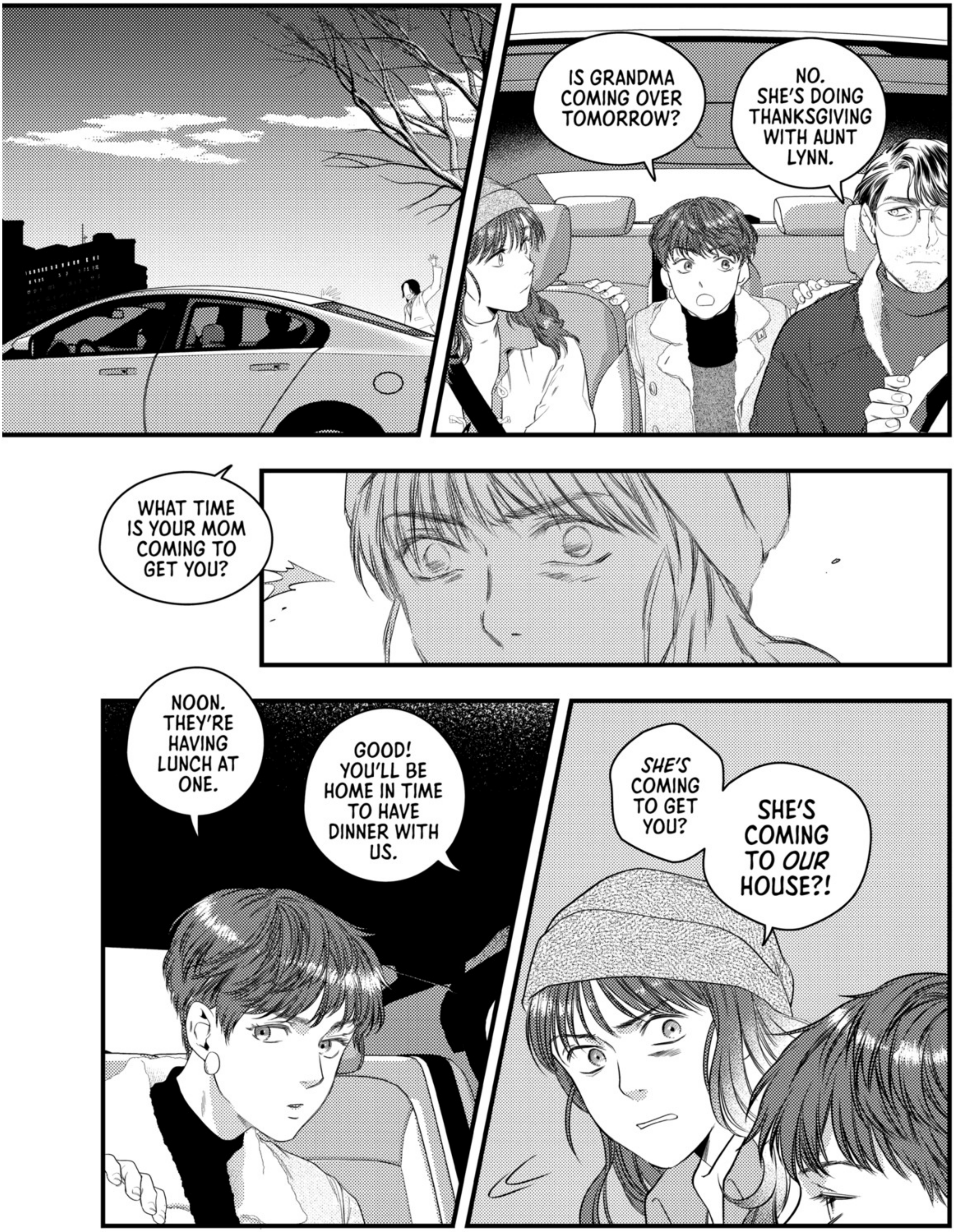

HEADING HOME FOR THANKSGIVING.
SKREE
THERE'S MY GIRL.

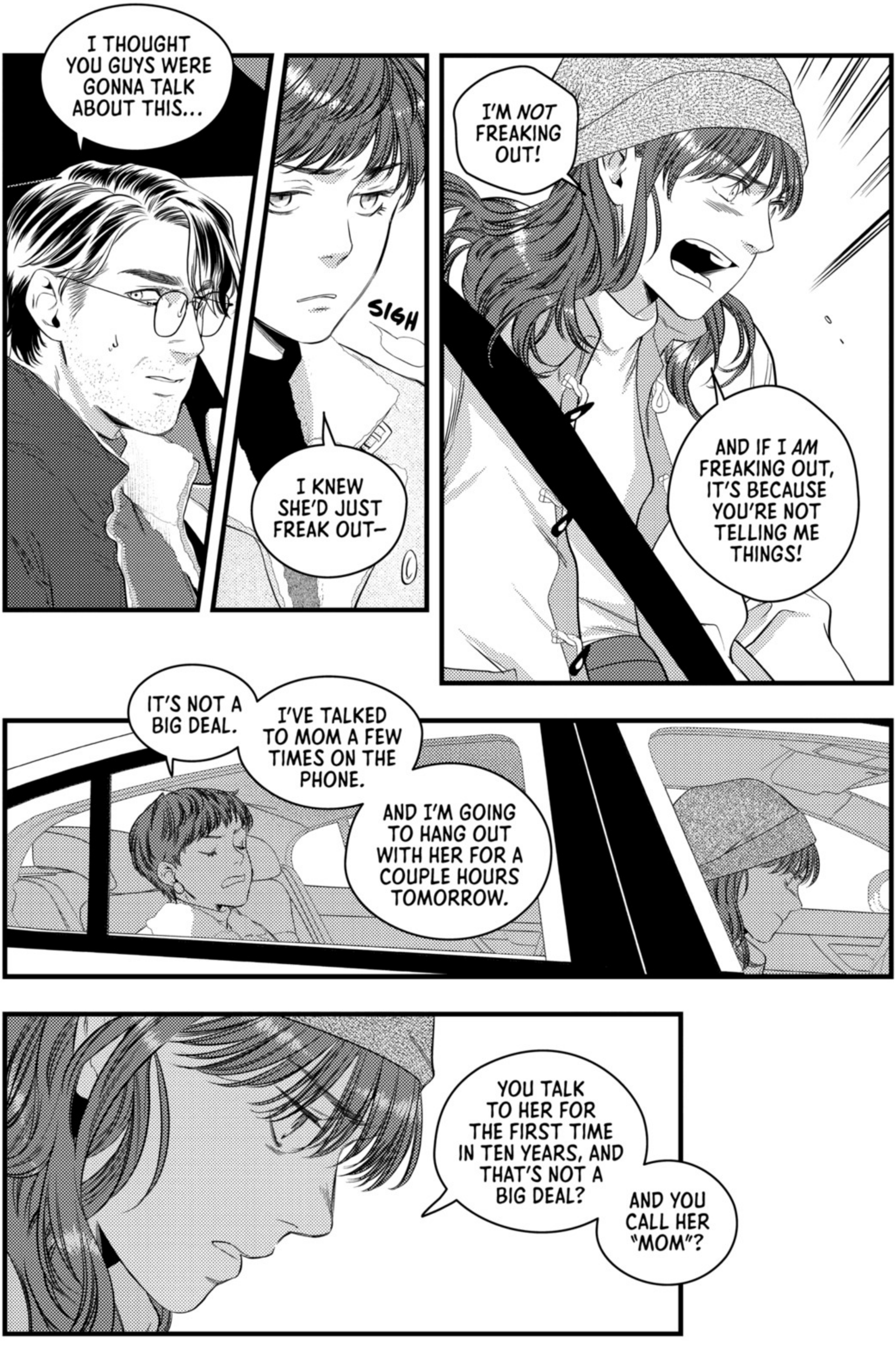

WHAT?
TURN
DAD, THAT'S OUR JAM!
SORRY! I'LL TURN IT UP IN THE BACK...
I SAID, HOW'S GRAVIOLI?
THE AD CAMPAIGN DAD WAS PITCHING ON.
TO HELL WITH GRAVIOLI.
IT'S REVOLTING. IT'S LIKE DOG FOOD FOR PEOPLE.
HEY, MAYBE THAT'S WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE PITCHED...

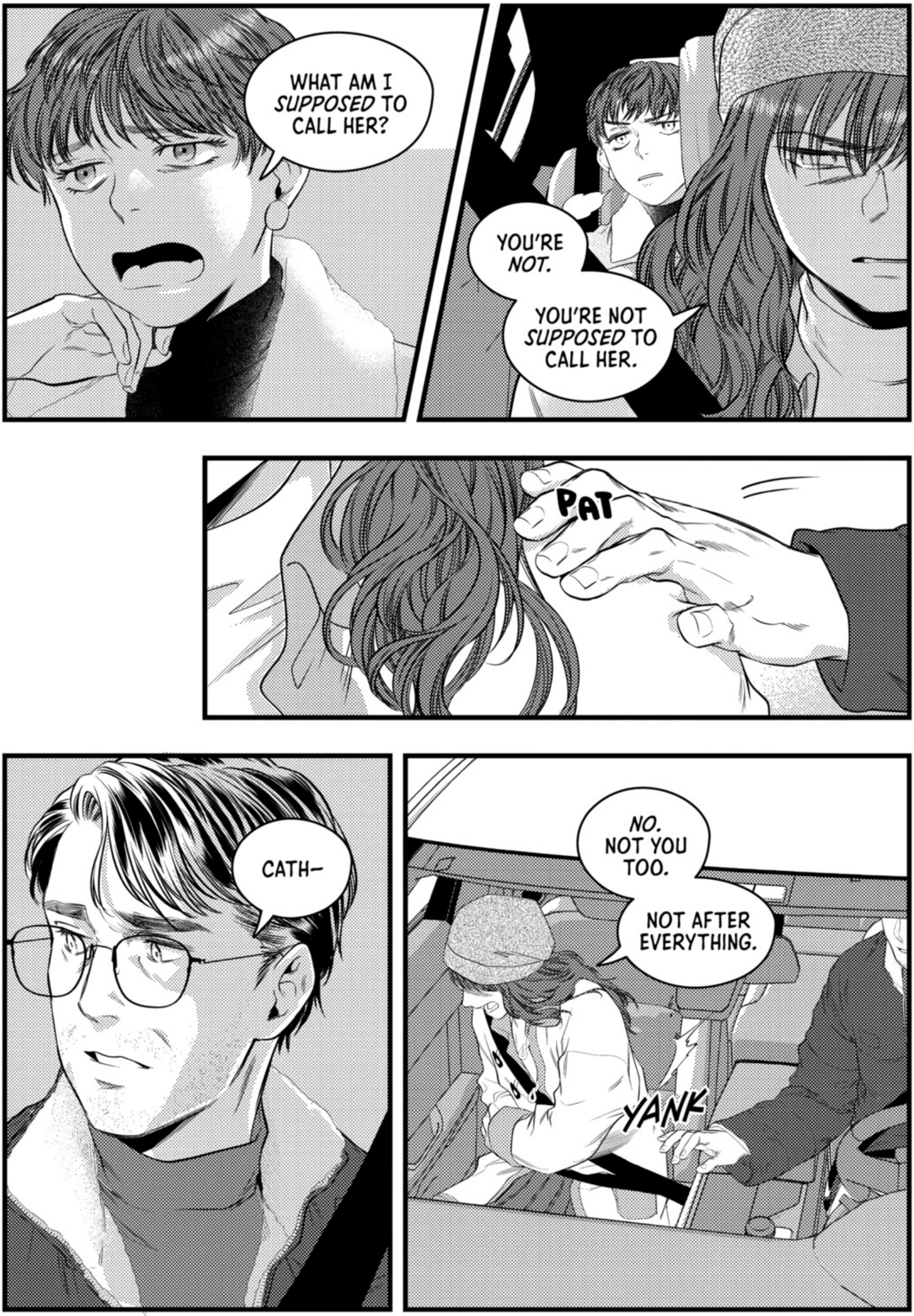

“DOES THE SMELL OF DOG FOOD MAKE YOUR MOUTH WATER?”
“LOVE DOG FOOD, BUT WORRIED ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORS NOTICING THE CANS?”
“GRAVIOLI... IT’S DOG FOOD—. FOR PEOPLE.”
HA HA HA
YOU DIDN’T GET THE BUSINESS. I’M SORRY.

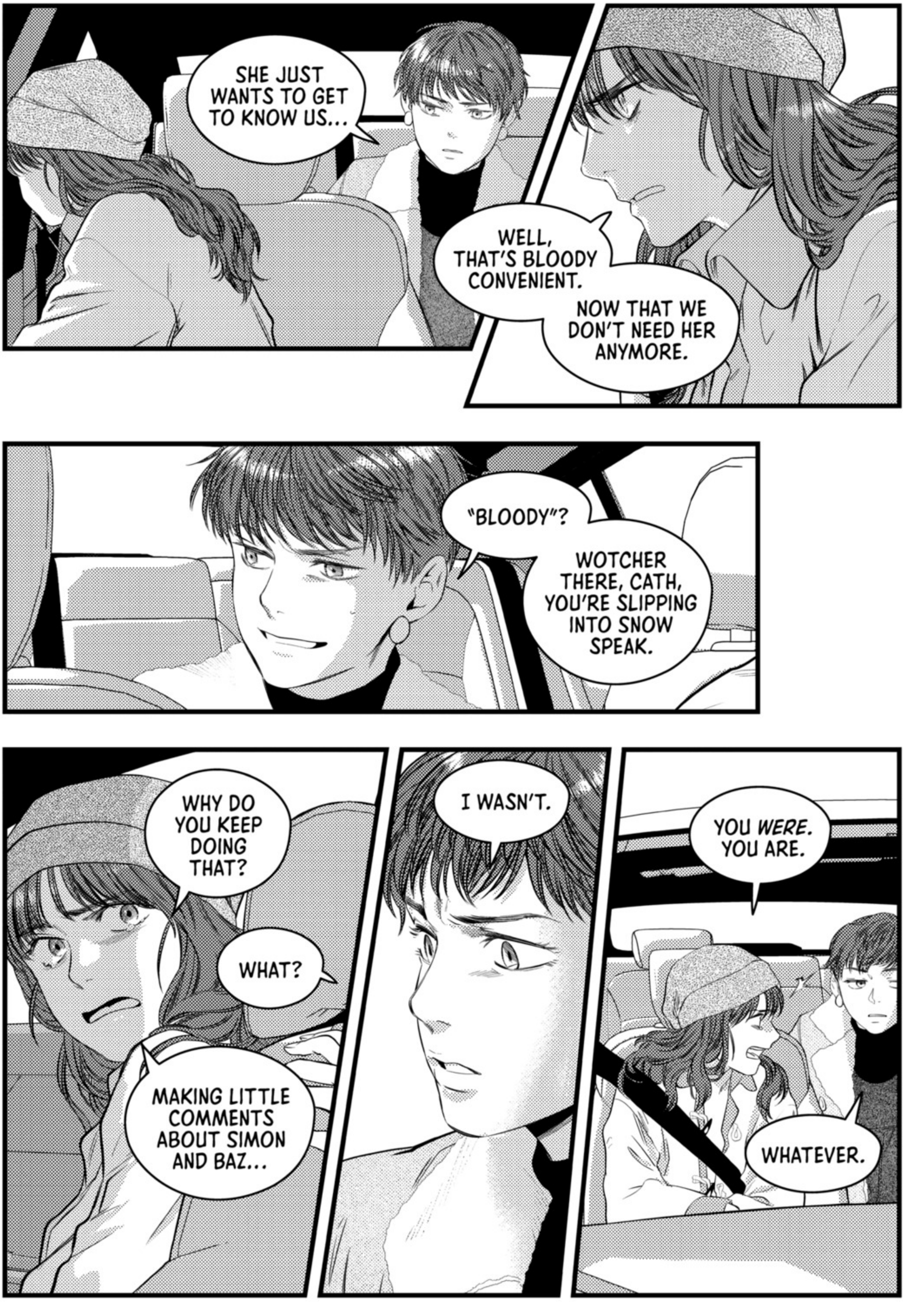

WE *DID* GET IT.
SOMETIMES *GETTING IT* IS INFINITELY WORSE THAN *NOT GETTING IT.*
THE FUCKERS REJECTED EVERY GOOD IDEA WE HAD...

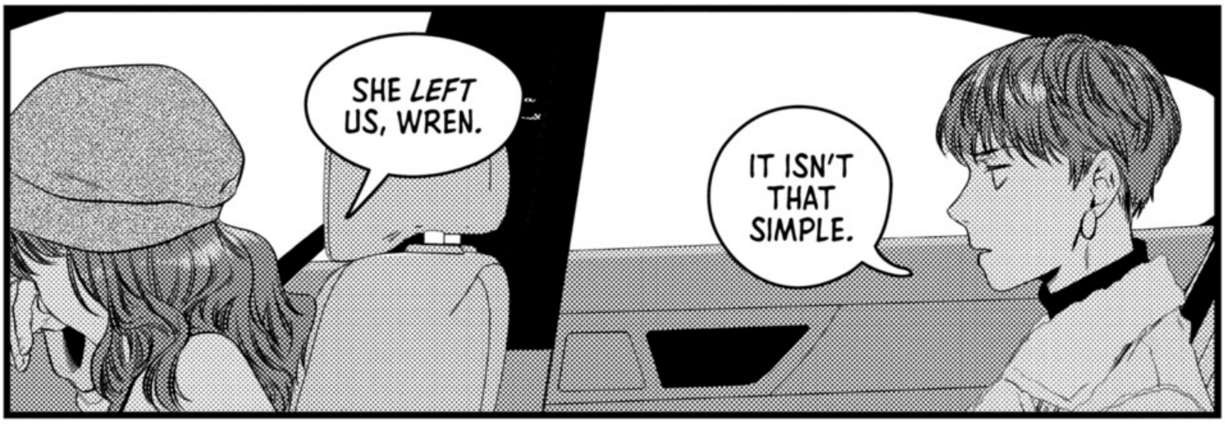

DAD ONLY CURSES WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT WORK...
OR WHEN HE'S MANIC.
NOW WE'RE DOING CARTOON BEARS WHO GROWL, "***GRRRRR-R***AVIOLI!"
THAT SOUNDS TERRIBLE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S MONEY...JUST MONEY.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
WITH DAD, IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT THE WORK, NOT THE MONEY.
THE MOST ELEGANT SOLUTION...
IT'S ABOUT FINDING THE PERFECT IDEA...

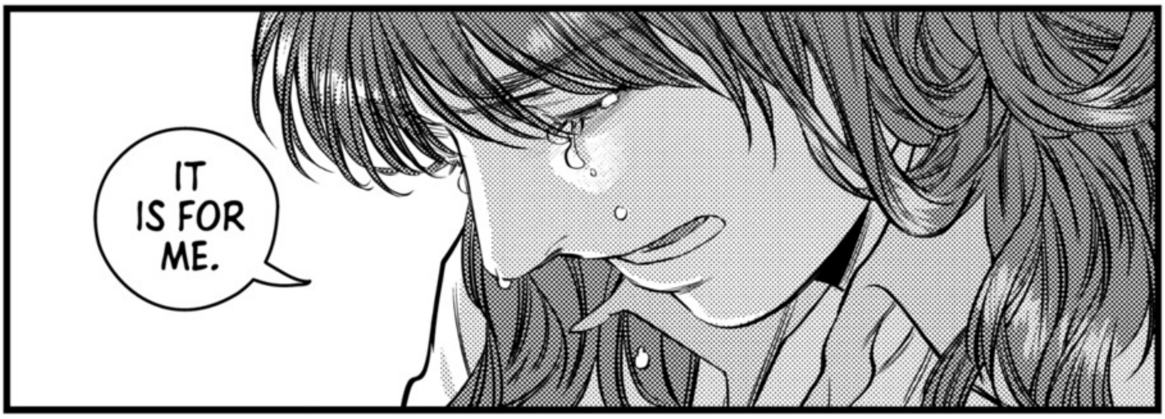

IS GRANDMA COMING OVER TOMORROW?
NO. SHE'S DOING THANKSGIVING WITH AUNT LYNN.
WHAT TIME IS YOUR MOM COMING TO GET YOU?
NOON. THEY'RE HAVING LUNCH AT ONE.
GOOD! YOU'LL BE HOME IN TIME TO HAVE DINNER WITH US.
SHE'S COMING TO GET YOU?
SHE'S COMING TO *OUR* HOUSE?!

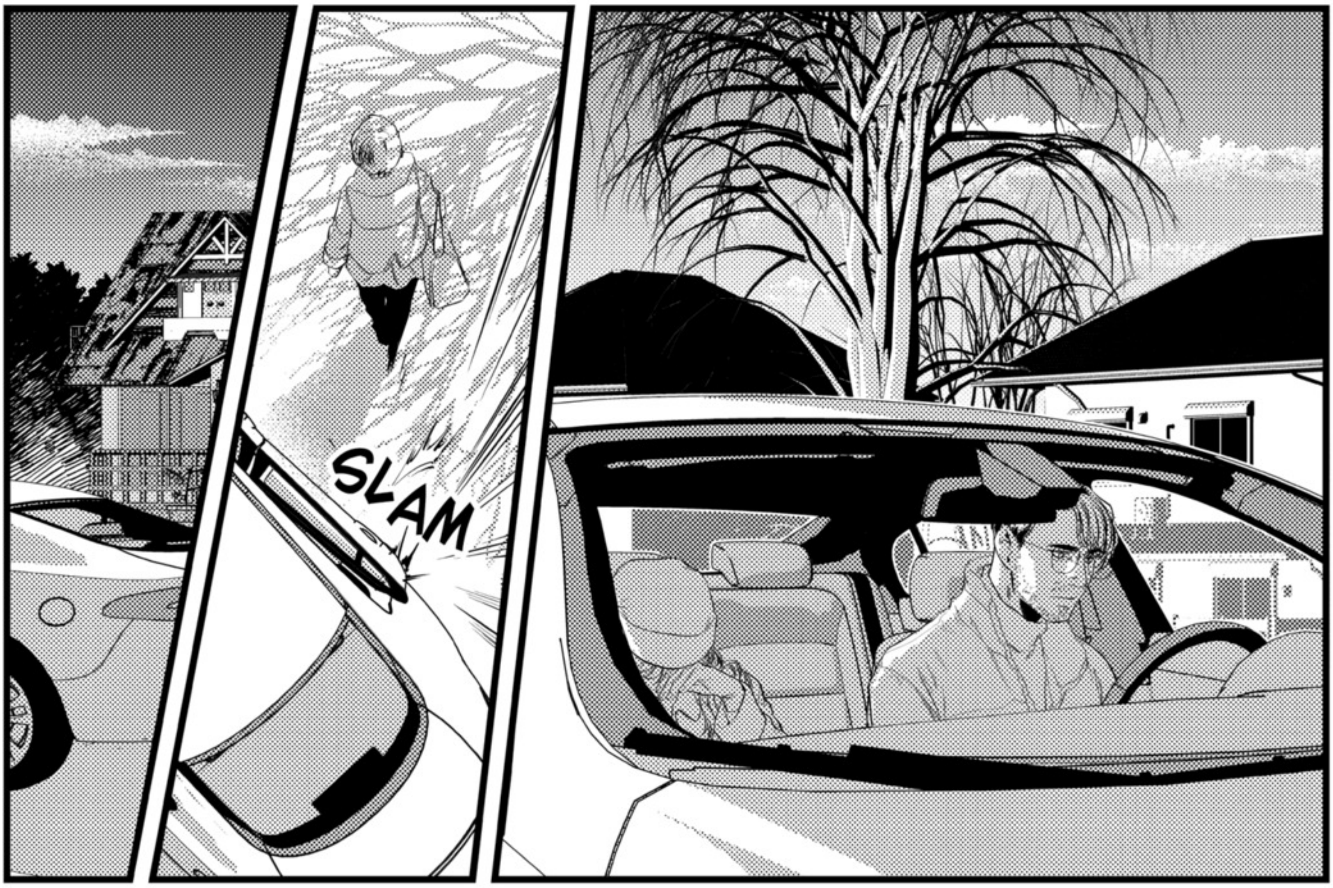

I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE GONNA TALK ABOUT THIS...
SIGH
I KNEW SHE'D JUST FREAK OUT–
I'M *NOT* FREAKING OUT!
AND IF I *AM* FREAKING OUT, IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME THINGS!
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.
I'VE TALKED TO MOM A FEW TIMES ON THE PHONE.
AND I'M GOING TO HANG OUT WITH HER FOR A COUPLE HOURS TOMORROW.
YOU TALK TO HER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TEN YEARS, AND THAT'S NOT A BIG DEAL?
AND YOU CALL HER "MOM"?

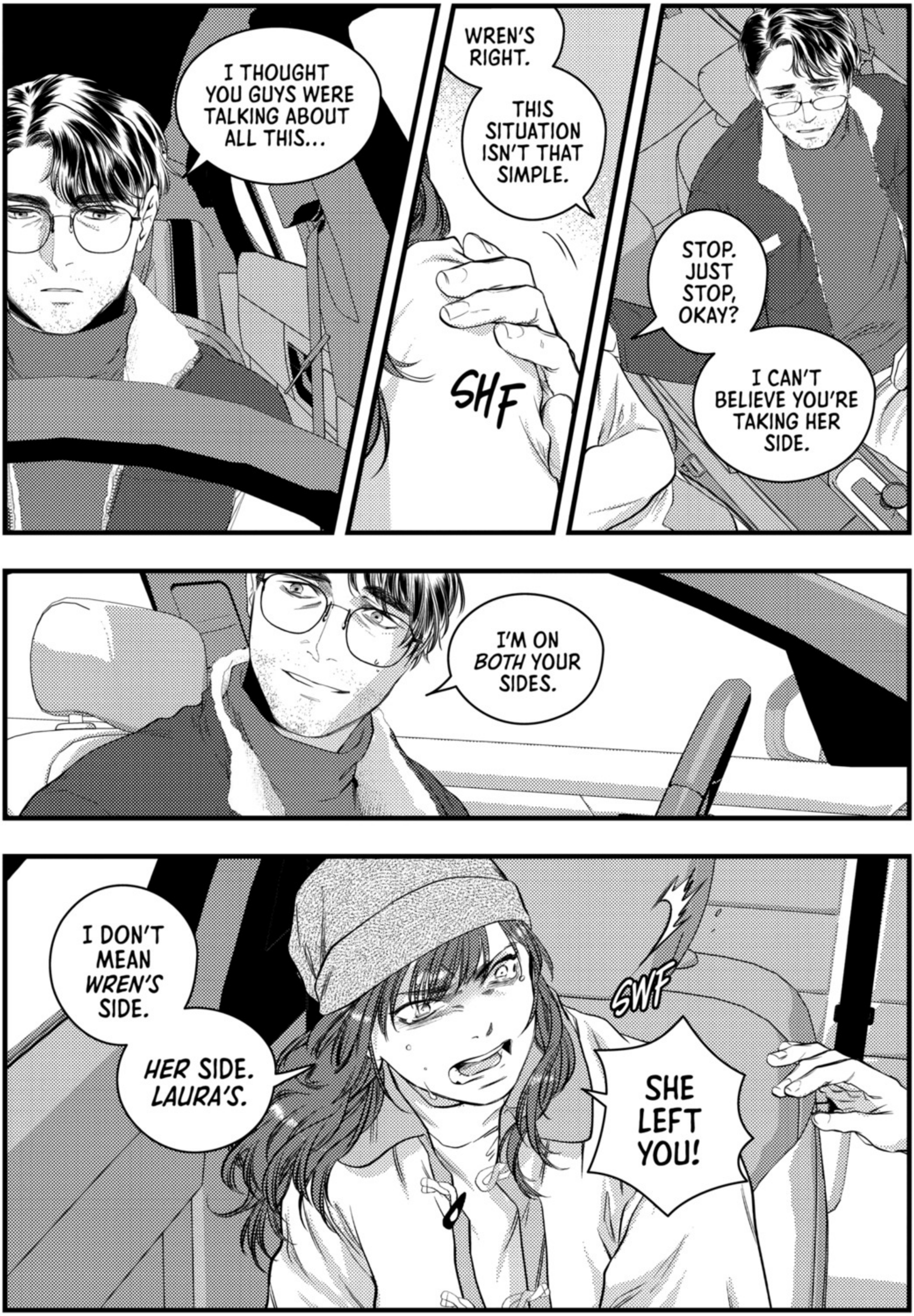

WHAT AM I *SUPPOSED* TO CALL HER?
YOU'RE *NOT.*
YOU'RE NOT *SUPPOSED* TO CALL HER.
PAT
CATH–
NO. NOT YOU TOO.
NOT AFTER EVERYTHING.
YANK

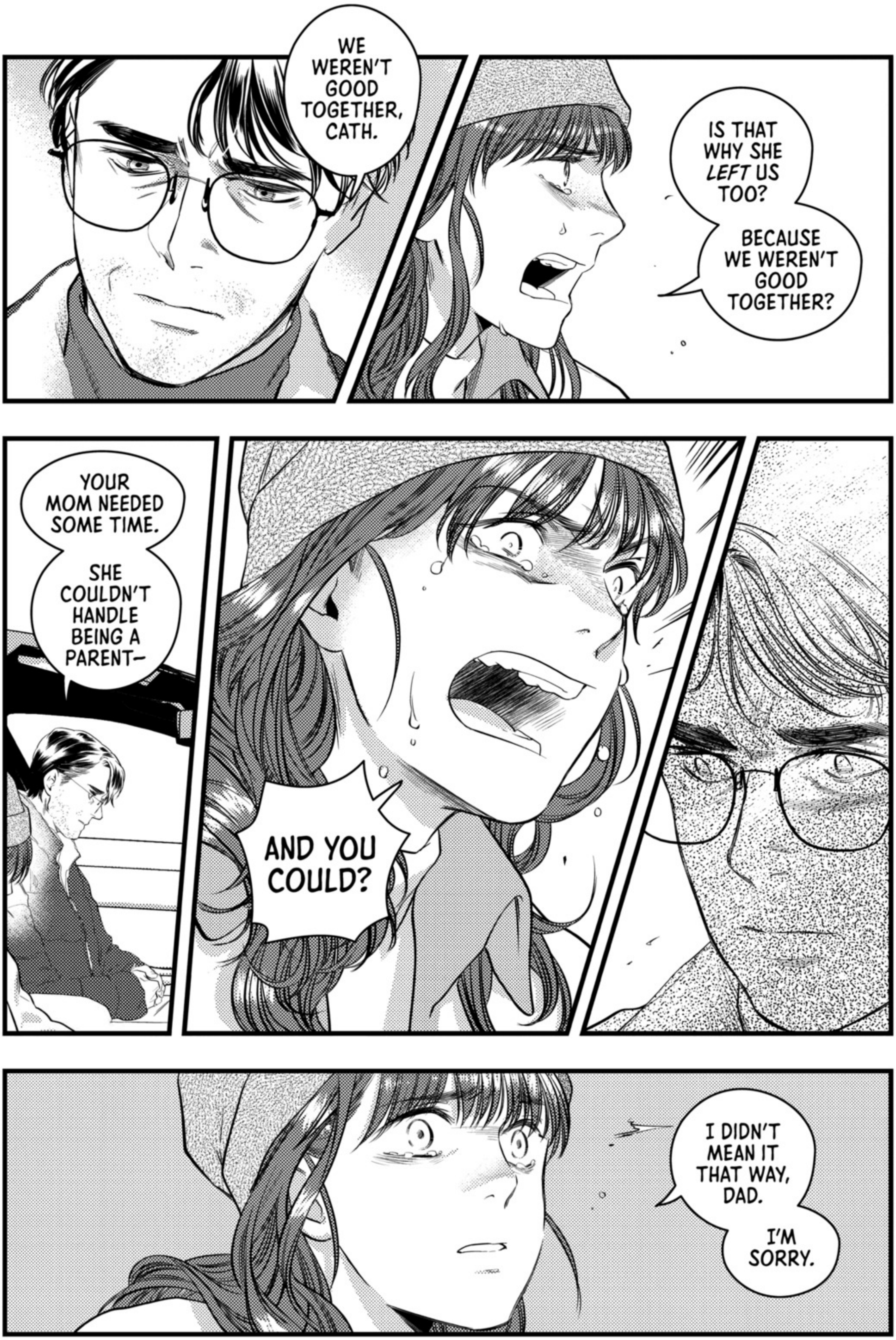

SHE JUST WANTS TO GET TO KNOW US...
WELL, THAT'S BLOODY CONVENIENT.
NOW THAT WE DON'T NEED HER ANYMORE.
"BLOODY"?
WOTCHER THERE, CATH, YOU'RE SLIPPING INTO SNOW SPEAK.
WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING THAT?
WHAT?
MAKING LITTLE COMMENTS ABOUT SIMON AND BAZ...
I WASN'T.
YOU *WERE*. YOU ARE.
WHATEVER.

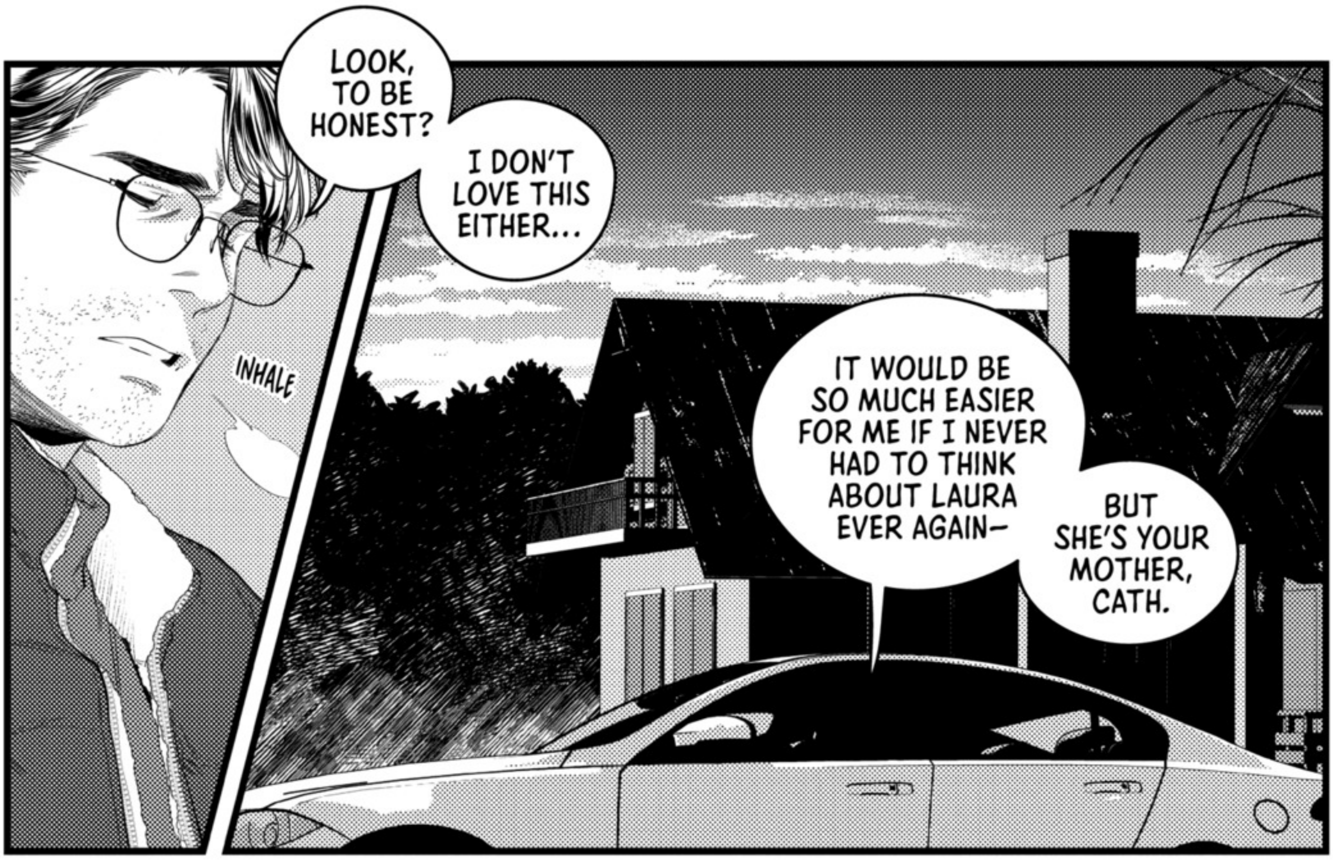

SHE *LEFT* US, WREN.
IT ISN'T THAT SIMPLE.

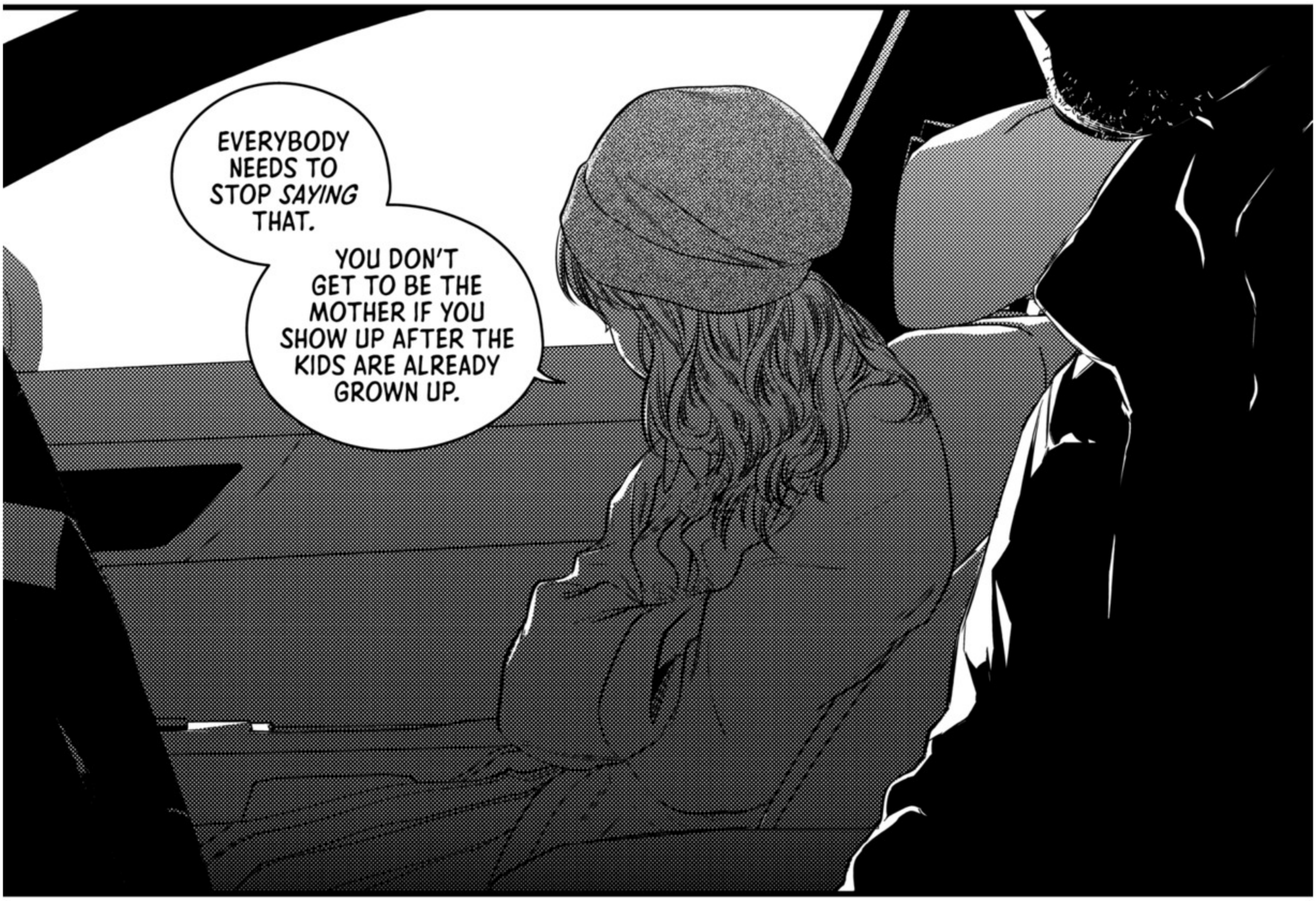

IT IS FOR ME.

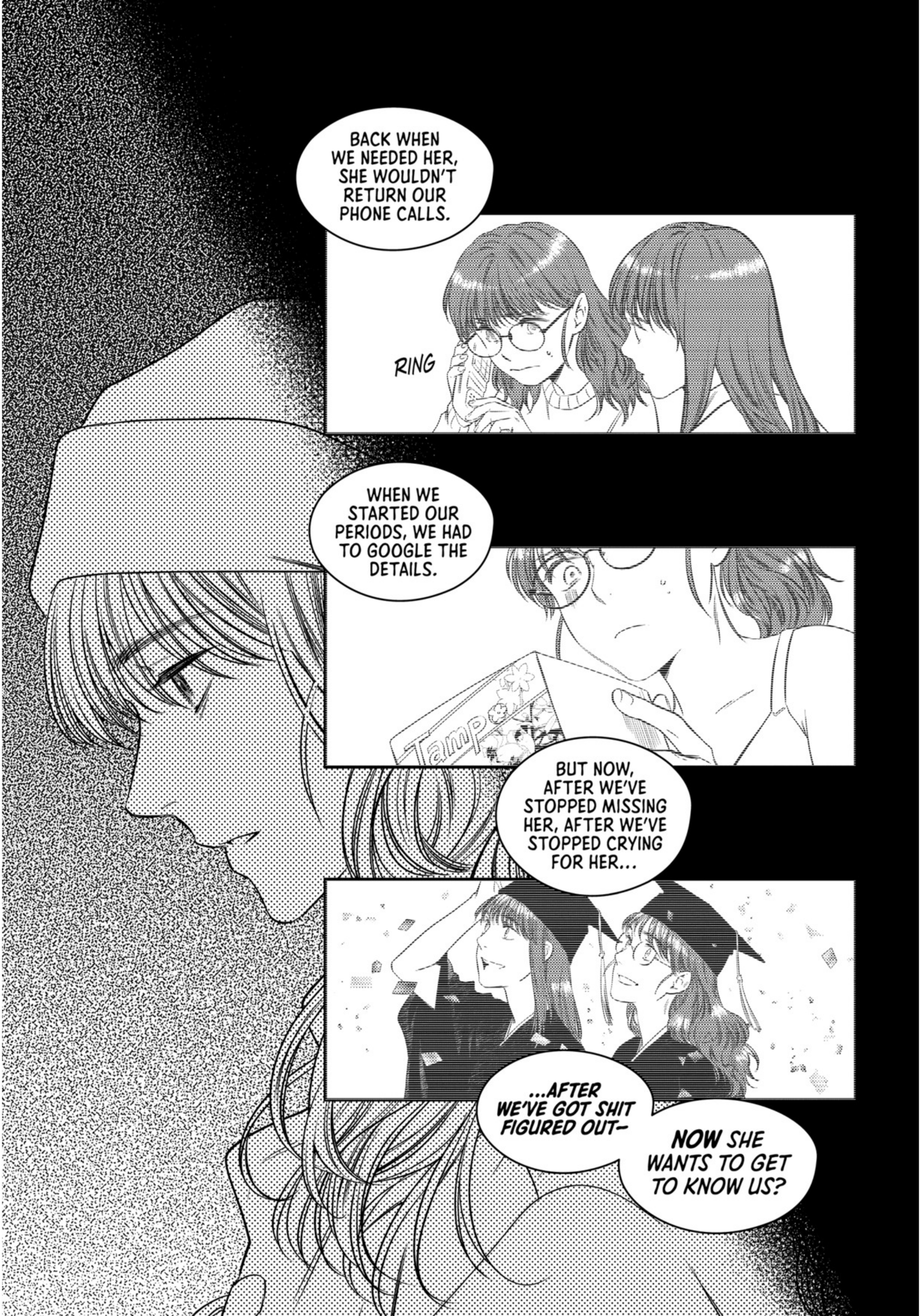

SLAM

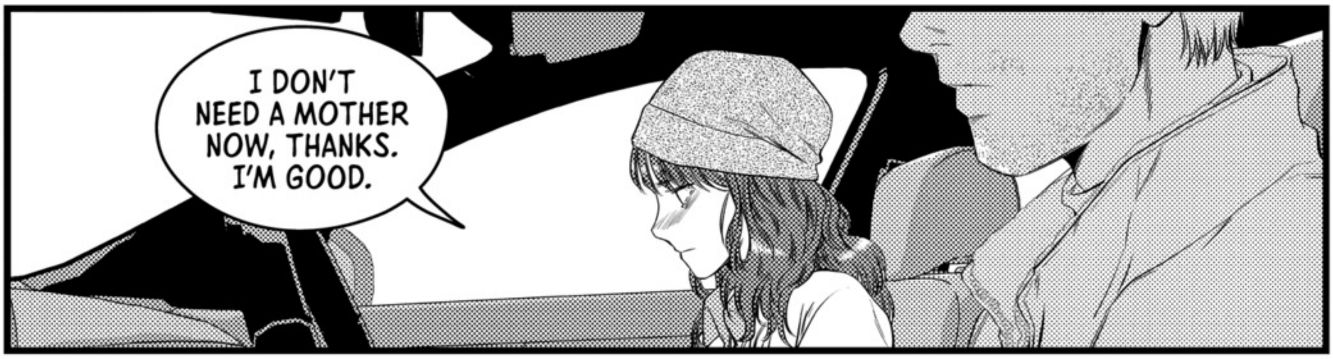

I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE TALKING ABOUT ALL THIS...
WREN'S RIGHT.
THIS SITUATION ISN'T THAT SIMPLE.
SHF
STOP. JUST STOP, OKAY?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TAKING HER SIDE.
I'M ON *BOTH* YOUR SIDES.
I DON'T MEAN *WREN'S* SIDE.
HER SIDE. LAURA'S.
SWF
SHE LEFT YOU!

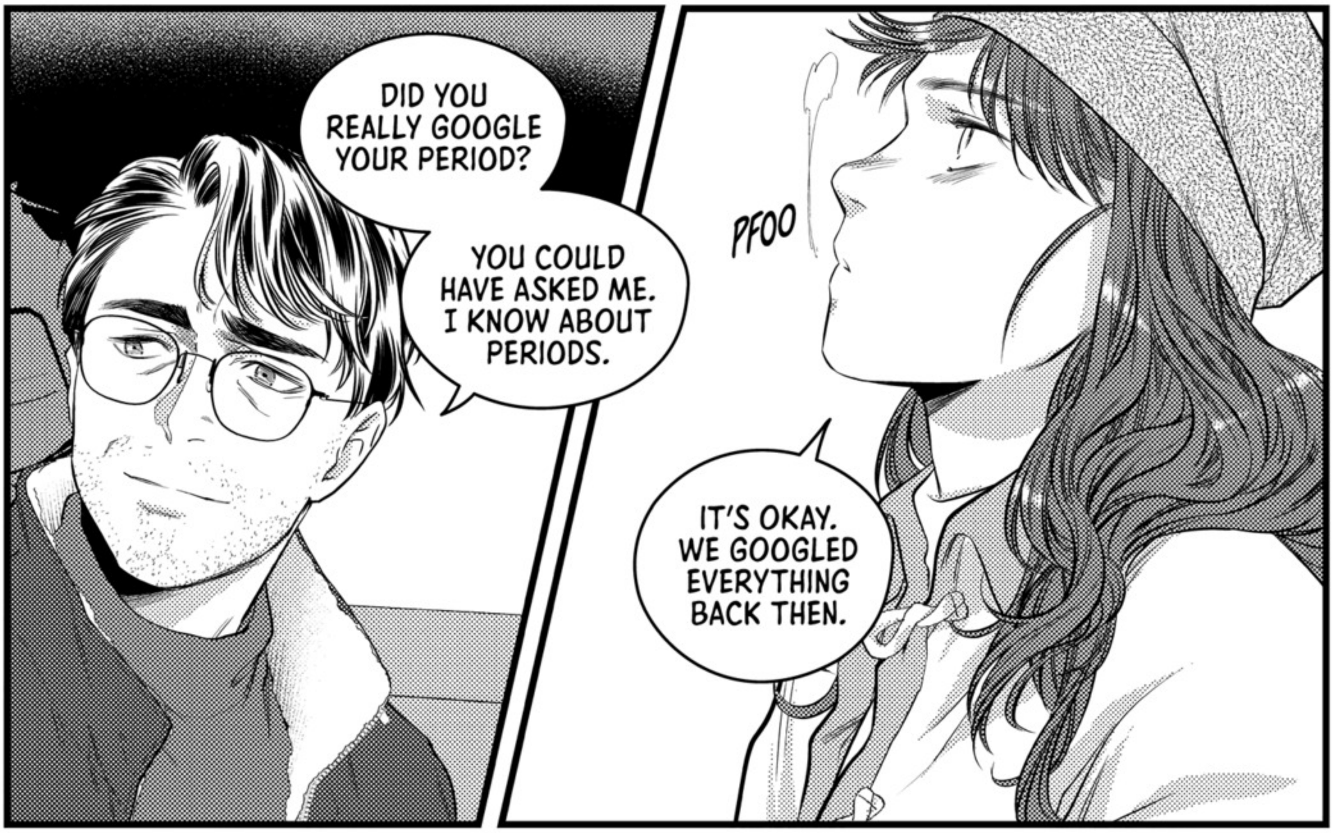

WE WEREN'T GOOD TOGETHER, CATH.
IS THAT WHY SHE *LEFT* US TOO?
BECAUSE WE WEREN'T GOOD TOGETHER?
YOUR MOM NEEDED SOME TIME.
SHE COULDN'T HANDLE BEING A PARENT—
AND YOU COULD?
I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY, DAD.
I'M SORRY.

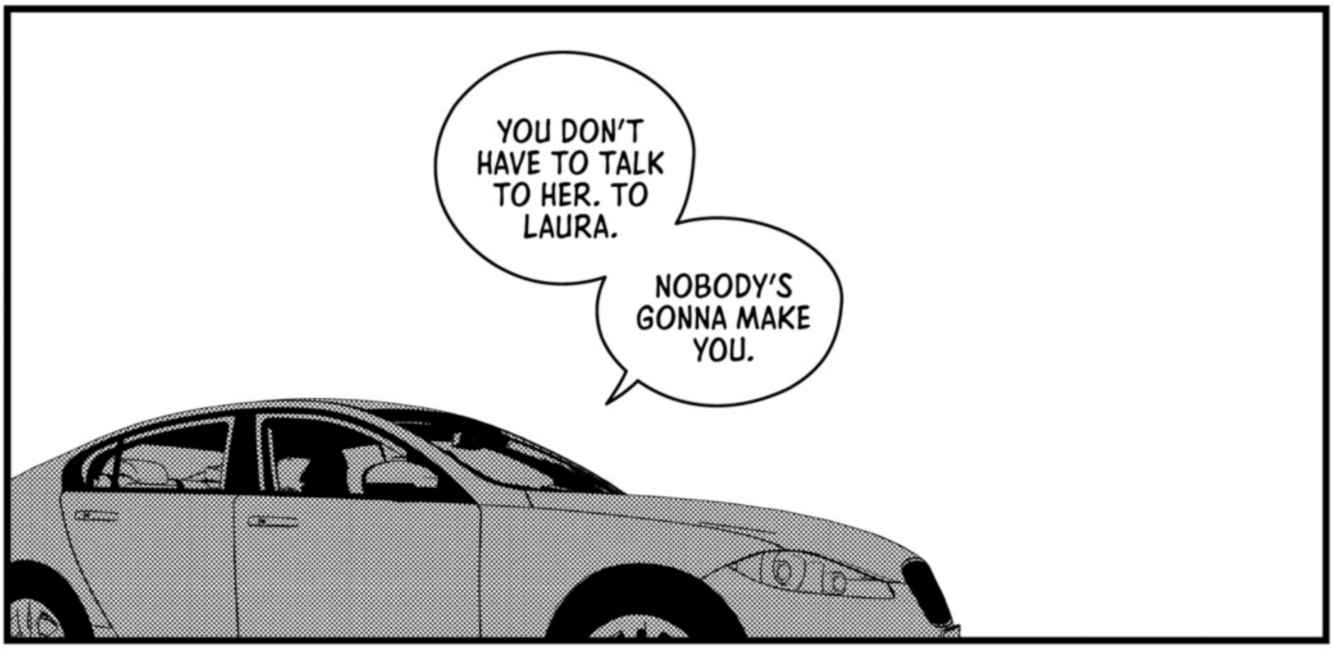

LOOK, TO BE HONEST?
I DON'T LOVE THIS EITHER...
INHALE
IT WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER FOR ME IF I NEVER HAD TO THINK ABOUT LAURA EVER AGAIN—
BUT SHE'S YOUR MOTHER, CATH.

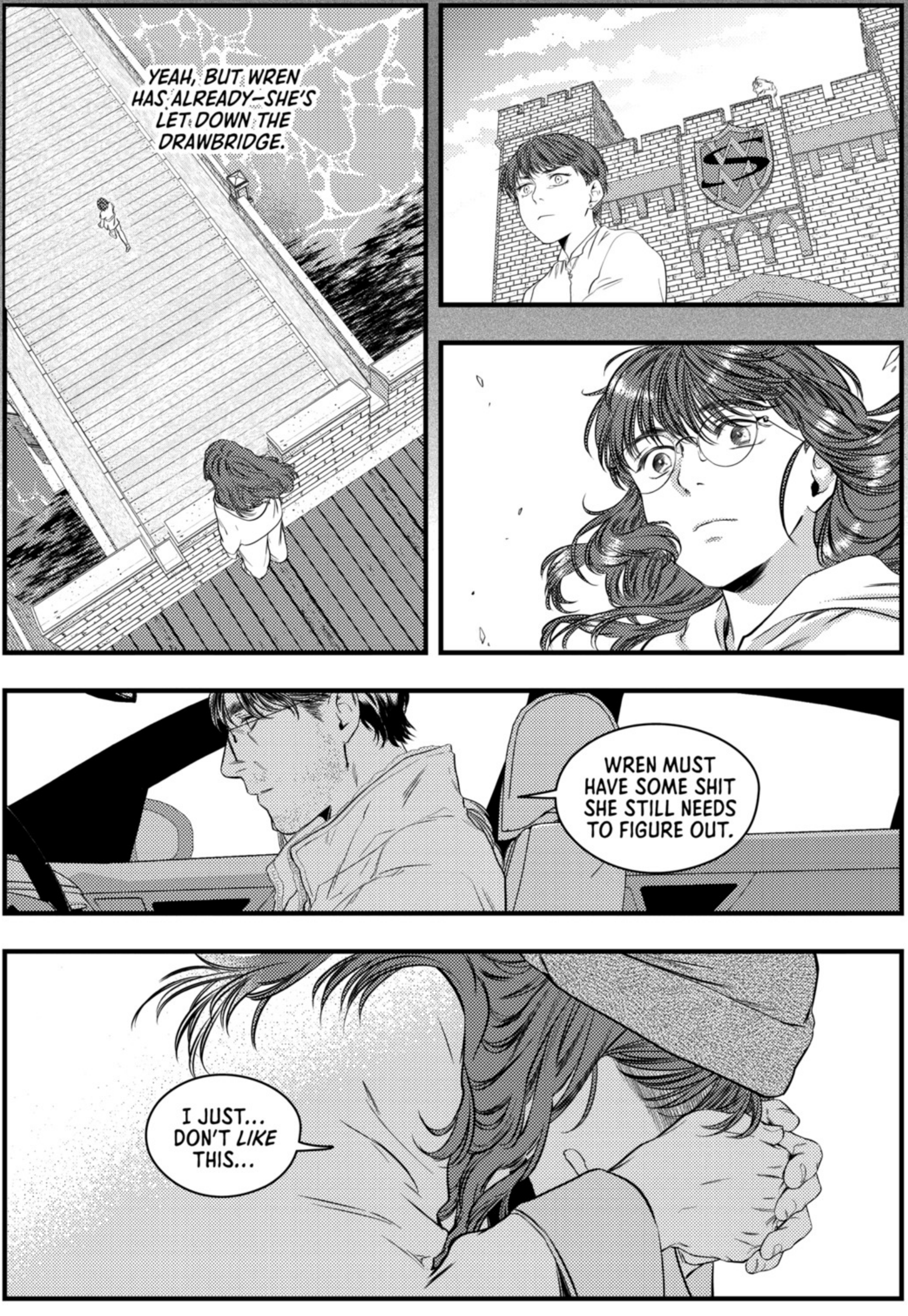

EVERYBODY NEEDS TO STOP *SAYING* THAT.
YOU DON'T GET TO BE THE MOTHER IF YOU SHOW UP AFTER THE KIDS ARE ALREADY GROWN UP.

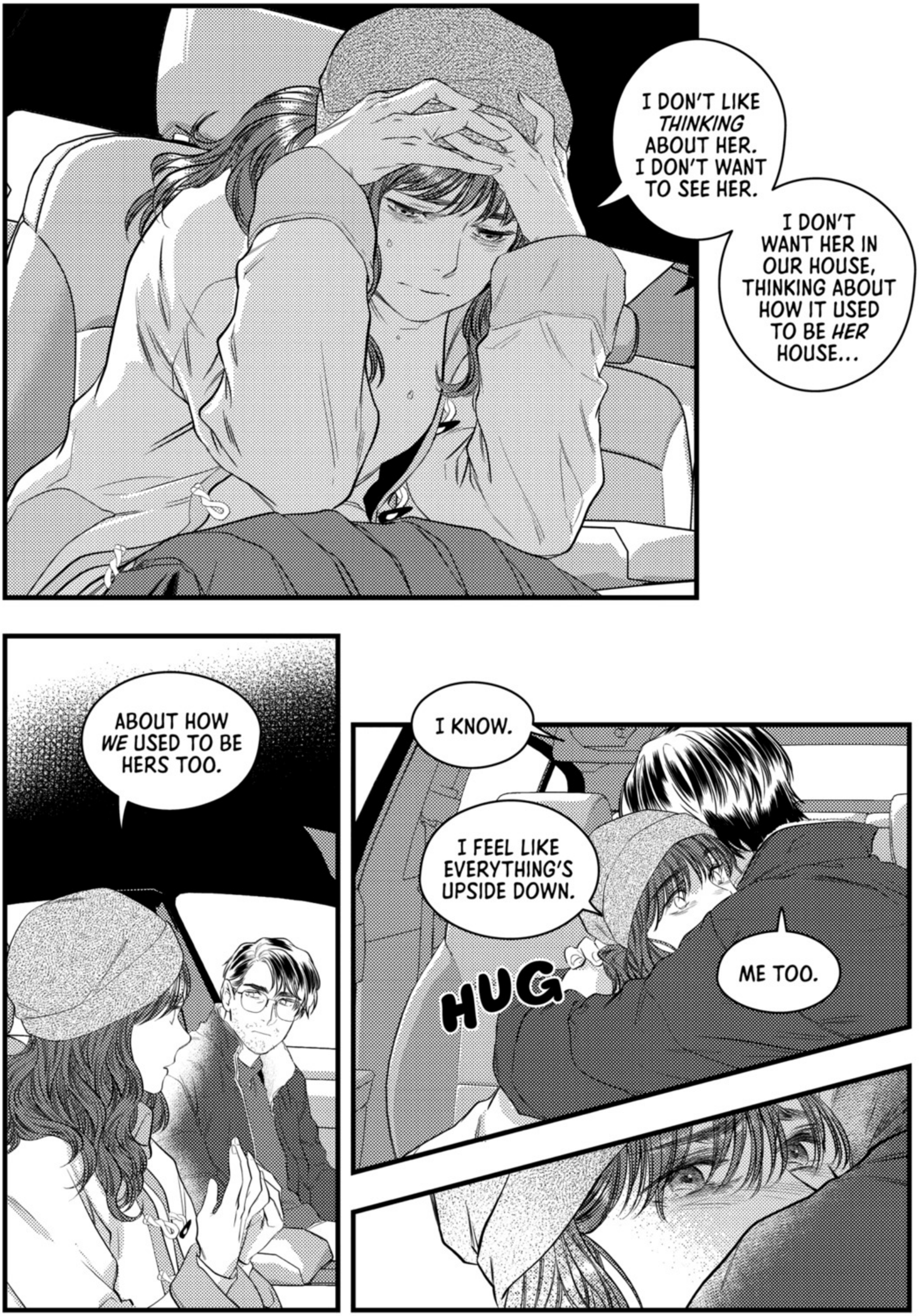

BACK WHEN WE NEEDED HER, SHE WOULDN'T RETURN OUR PHONE CALLS.
RING
WHEN WE STARTED OUR PERIODS, WE HAD TO GOOGLE THE DETAILS.
Tampo
BUT NOW, AFTER WE'VE STOPPED MISSING HER, AFTER WE'VE STOPPED CRYING FOR HER...
...AFTER WE'VE GOT SHIT FIGURED OUT–
NOW SHE WANTS TO GET TO KNOW US?

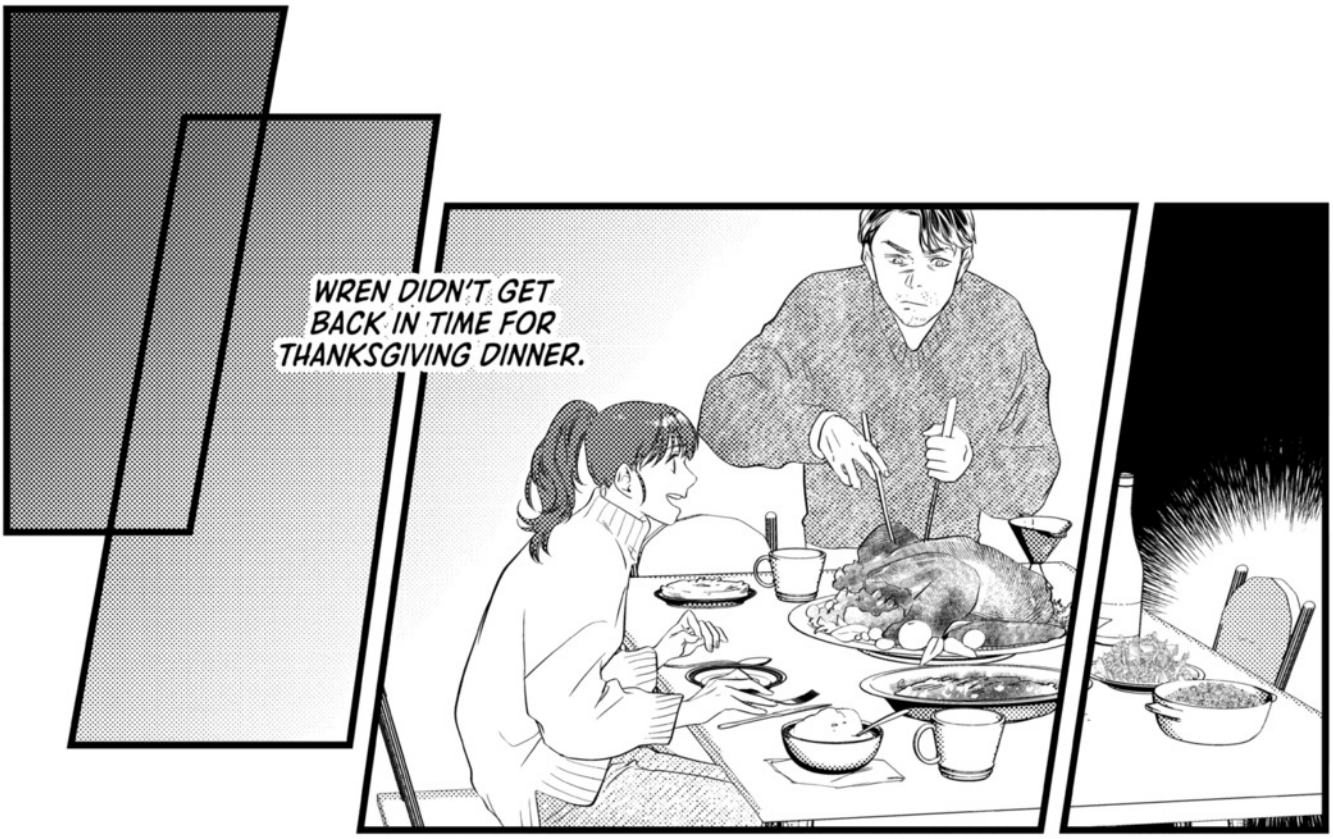

I DON'T NEED A MOTHER NOW, THANKS. I'M GOOD.

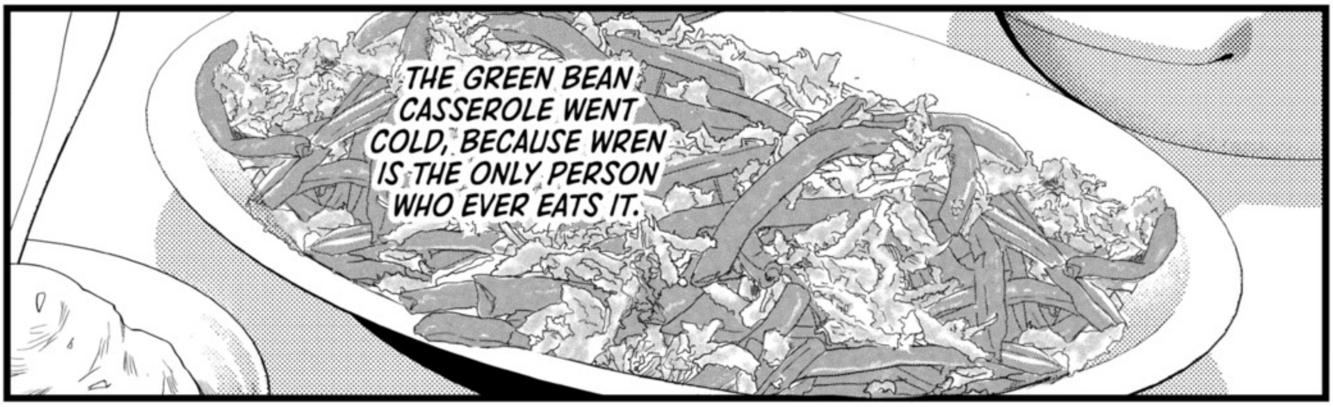

DID YOU REALLY GOOGLE YOUR PERIOD?
YOU COULD HAVE ASKED ME. I KNOW ABOUT PERIODS.
PFOO
IT'S OKAY. WE GOOGLED EVERYTHING BACK THEN.

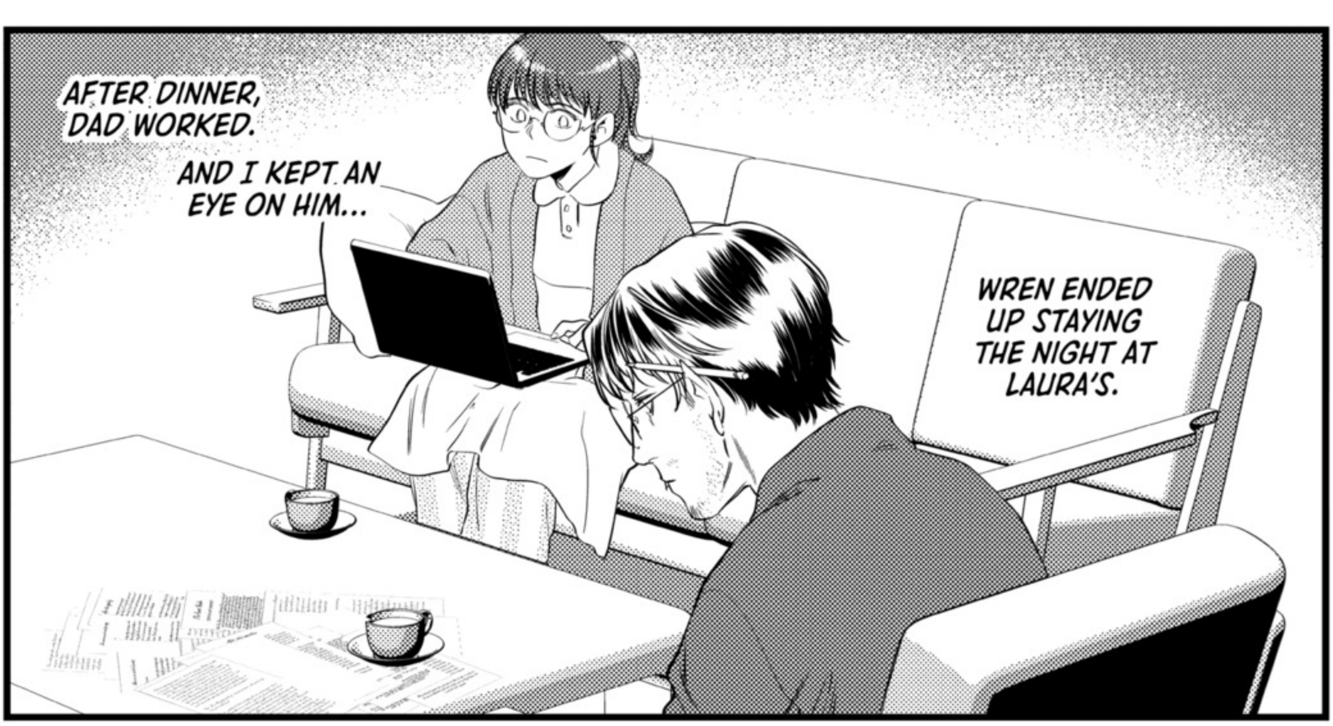

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK TO HER. TO LAURA.
NOBODY'S GONNA MAKE YOU.


YEAH, BUT WREN HAS ALREADY—SHE'S LET DOWN THE DRAWBRIDGE.
WREN MUST HAVE SOME SHIT SHE STILL NEEDS TO FIGURE OUT.
I JUST... DON'T *LIKE* THIS...


I DON'T LIKE *THINKING* ABOUT HER. I DON'T WANT TO SEE HER.
I DON'T WANT HER IN OUR HOUSE, THINKING ABOUT HOW IT USED TO BE *HER* HOUSE...
ABOUT HOW *WE* USED TO BE HERS TOO.
I KNOW.
I FEEL LIKE EVERYTHING'S UPSIDE DOWN.
HUG
ME TOO.

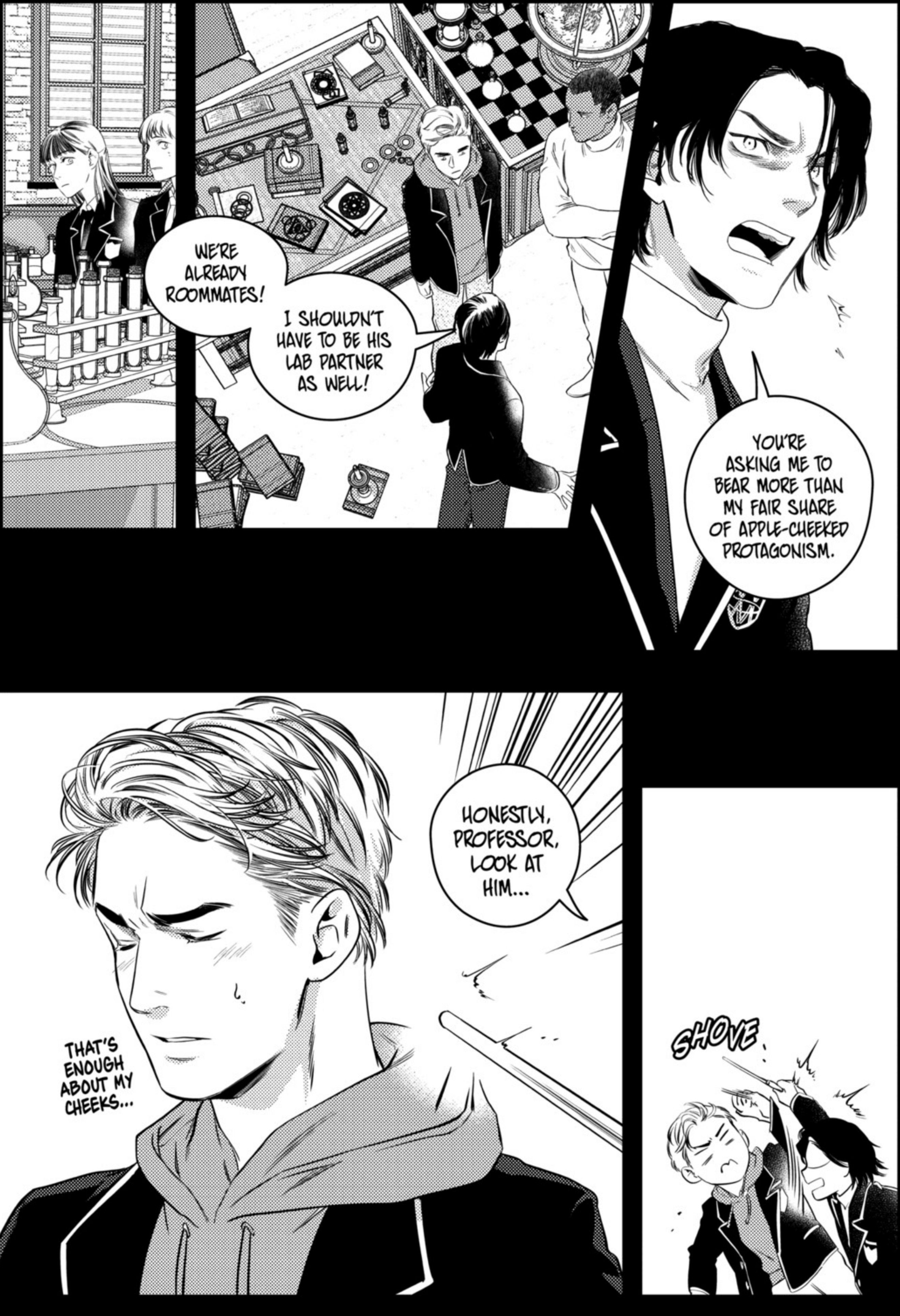

WREN DIDN'T GET BACK IN TIME FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER.

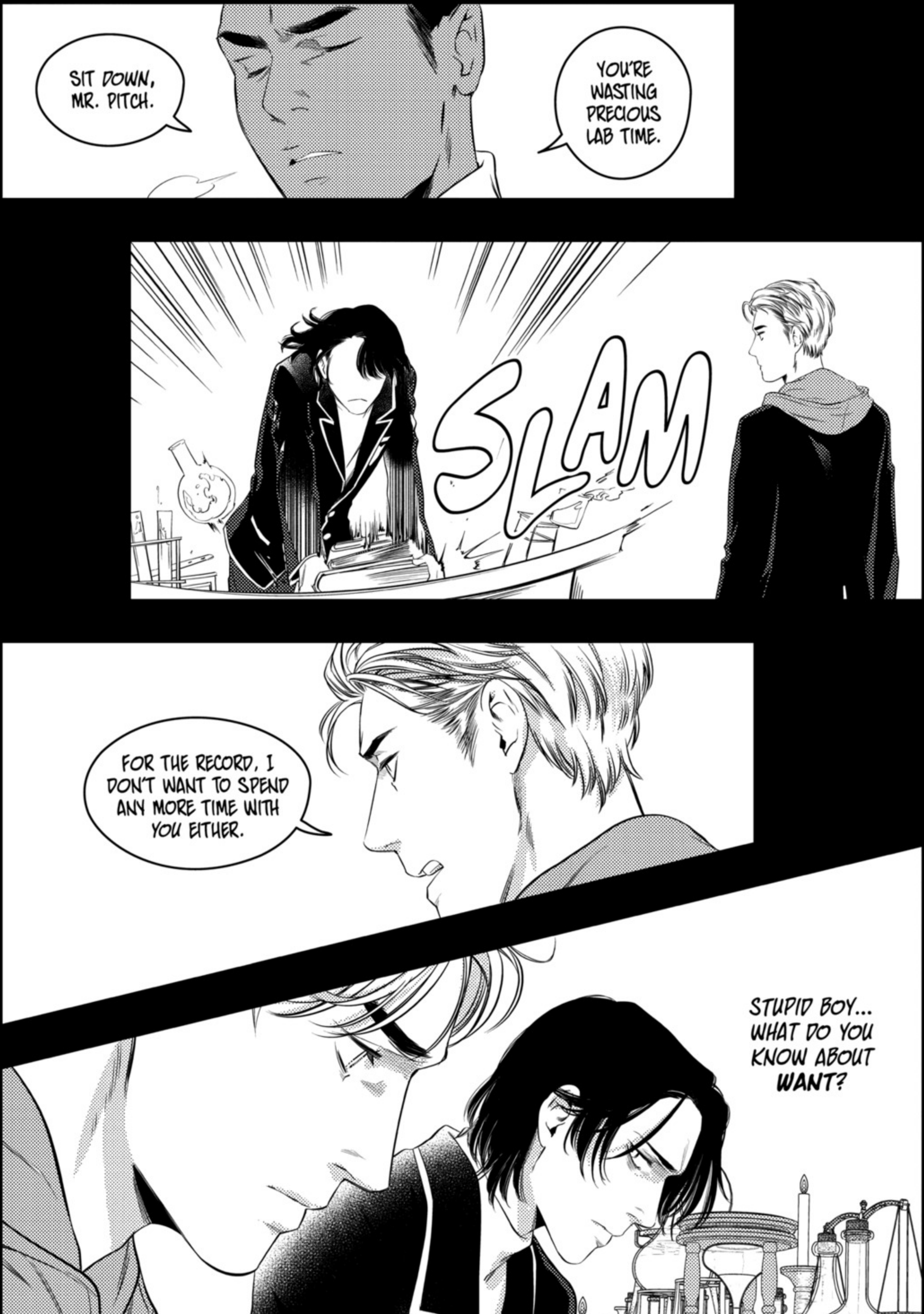

THE GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE WENT COLD, BECAUSE WREN IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO EVER EATS IT.

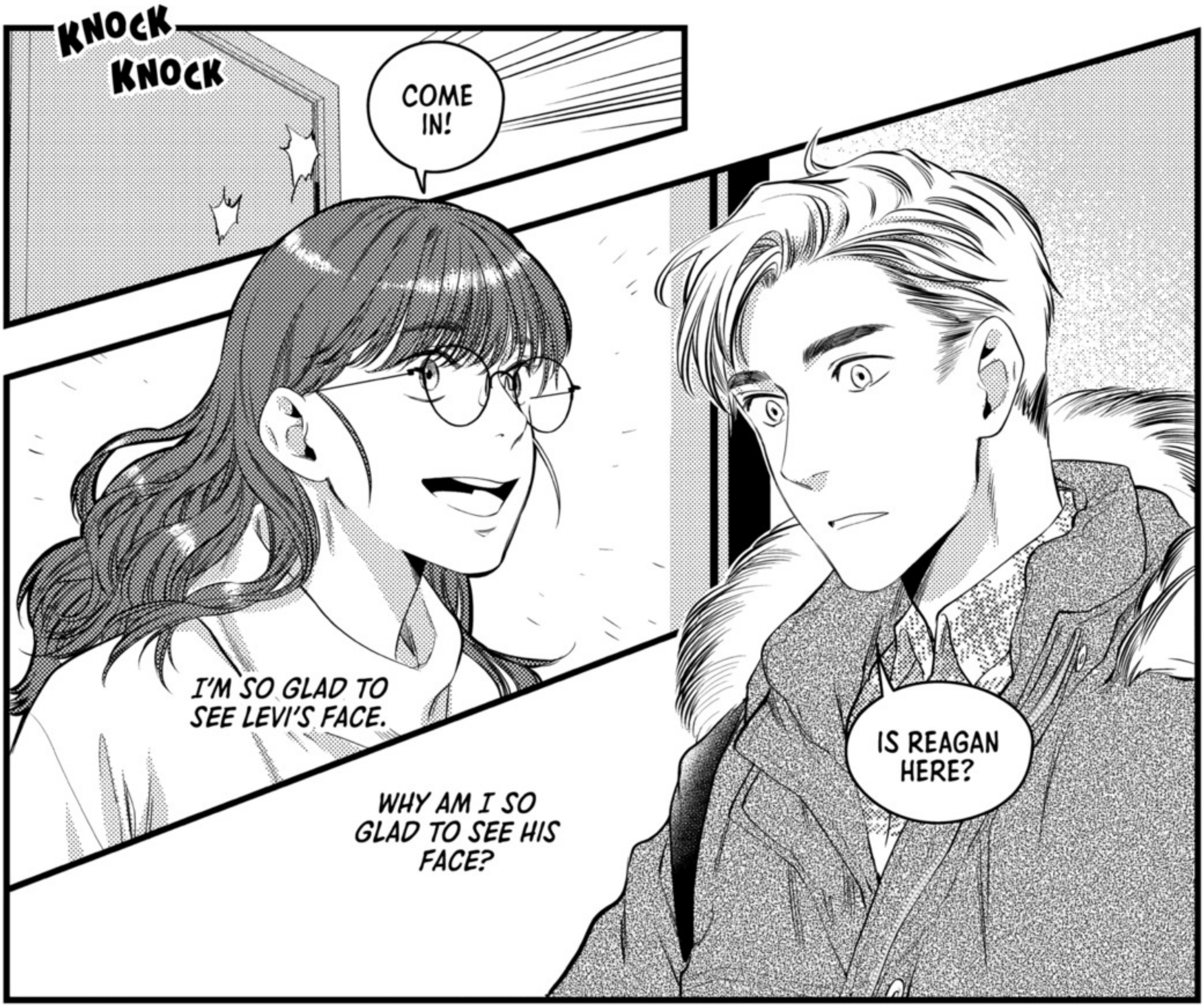

AFTER DINNER, DAD WORKED.
AND I KEPT AN EYE ON HIM...
WREN ENDED UP STAYING THE NIGHT AT LAURA'S.

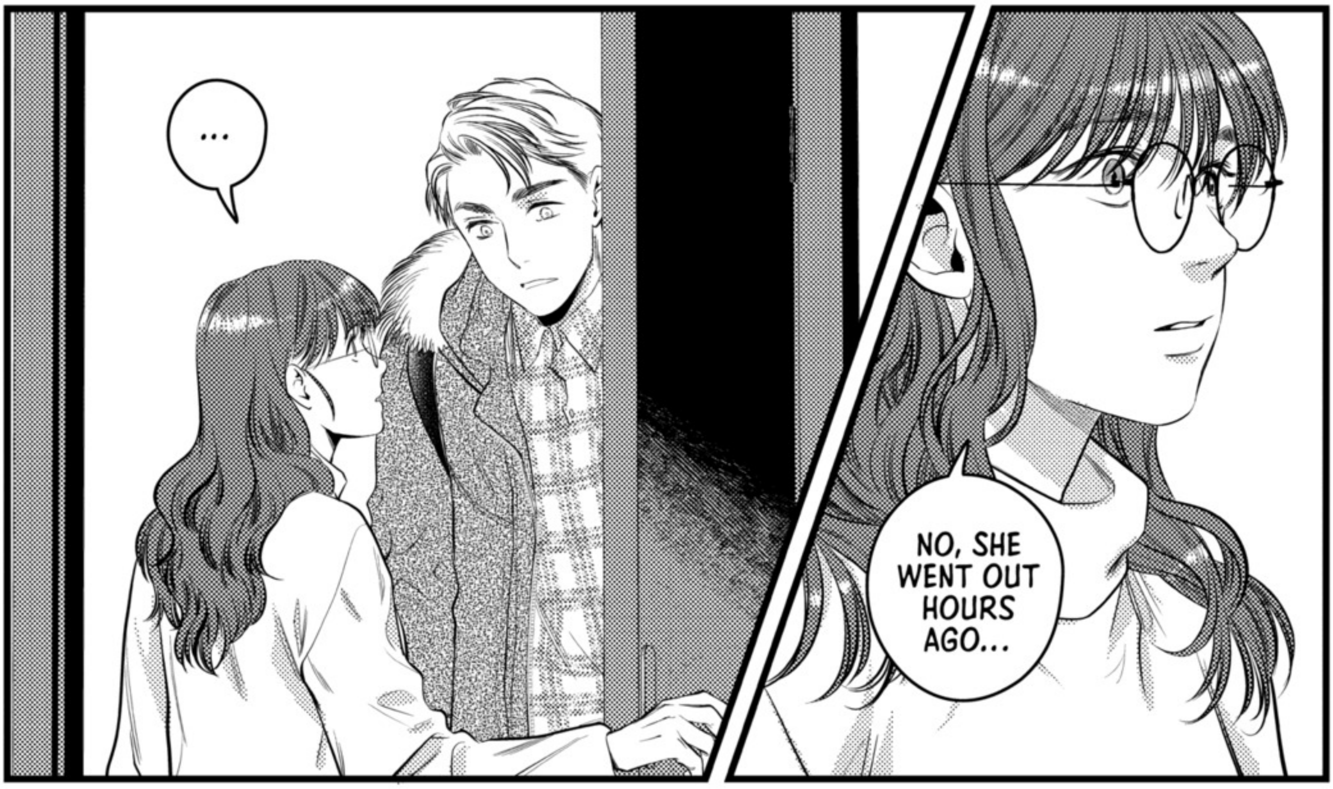
From “Five Times Baz Went to Chemistry and One Time He Didn’t”

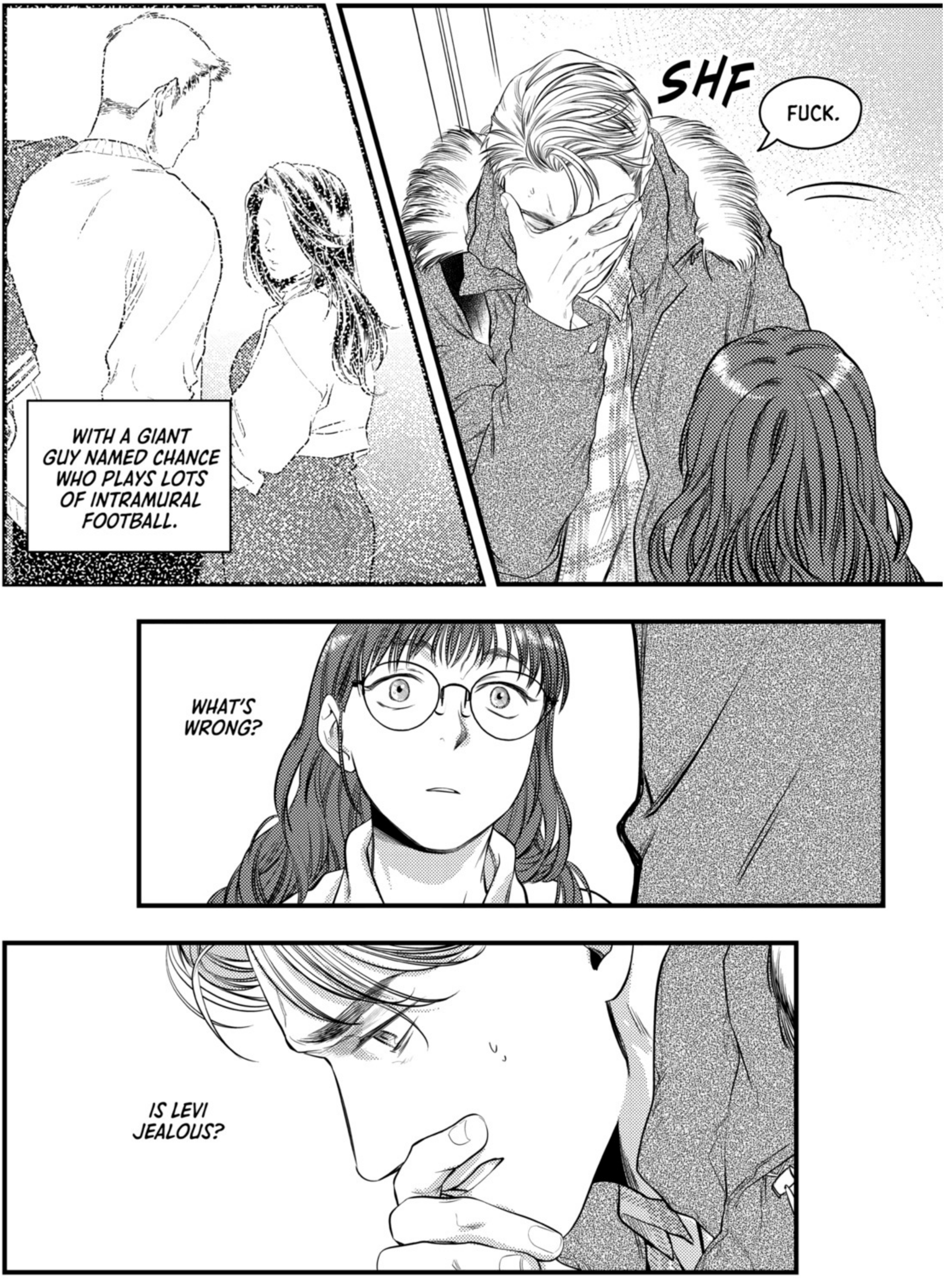
by Magicath and Wrenegade, age 16

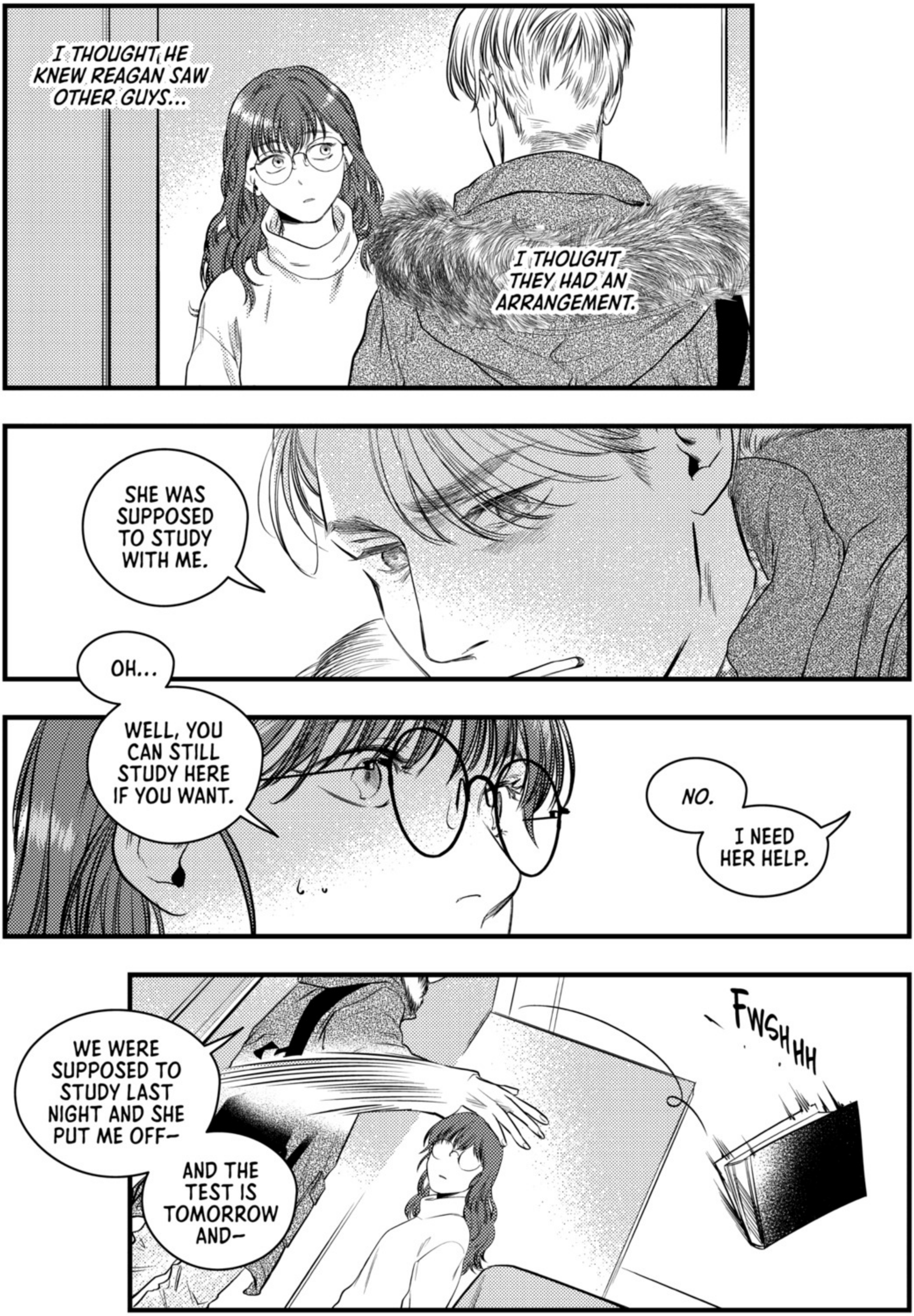

WE'RE ALREADY ROOMMATES!
I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE HIS LAB PARTNER AS WELL!
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BEAR MORE THAN MY FAIR SHARE OF APPLE-CHEEKED PROTAGONISM.
HONESTLY, PROFESSOR, LOOK AT HIM...
THAT'S ENOUGH ABOUT MY CHEEKS...
SHOVE

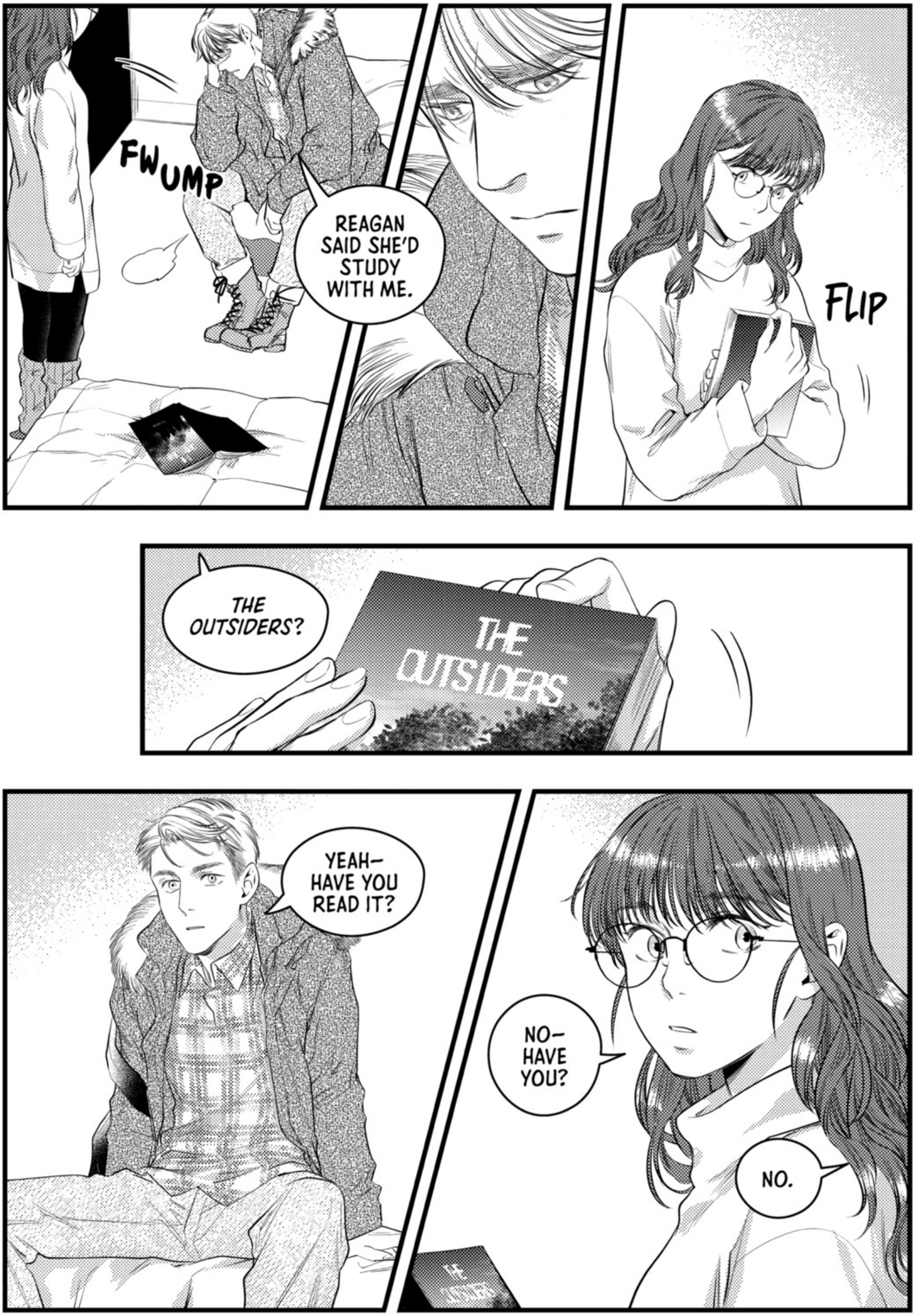

SIT DOWN, MR. PITCH.
YOU'RE WASTING PRECIOUS LAB TIME.
SLAM
FOR THE RECORD, I DON'T WANT TO SPEND ANY MORE TIME WITH YOU EITHER.
STUPID BOY... WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT **WANT**?

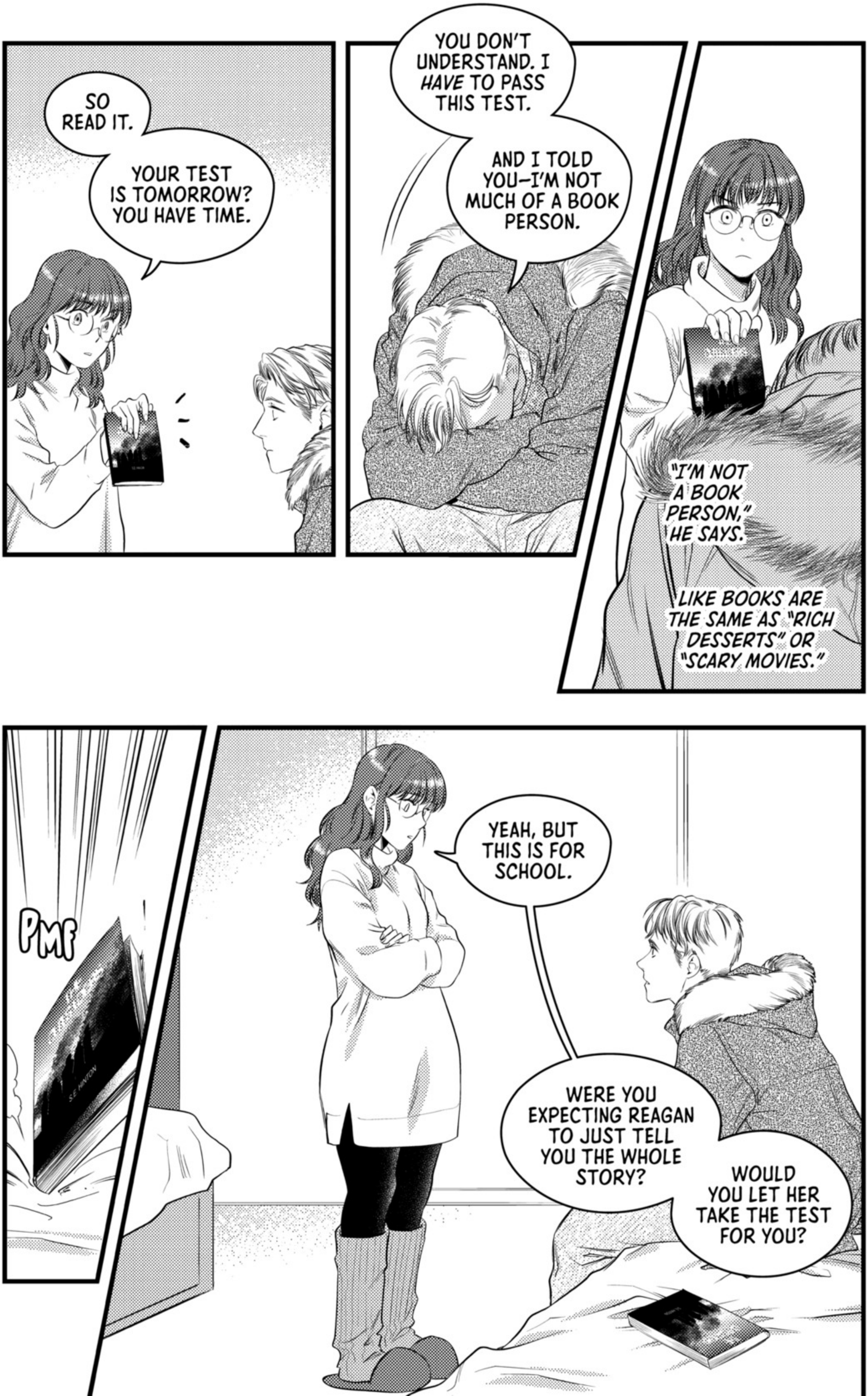

KNOCK KNOCK
COME IN!
I'M SO GLAD TO SEE LEVI'S FACE.
WHY AM I SO GLAD TO SEE HIS FACE?
IS REAGAN HERE?

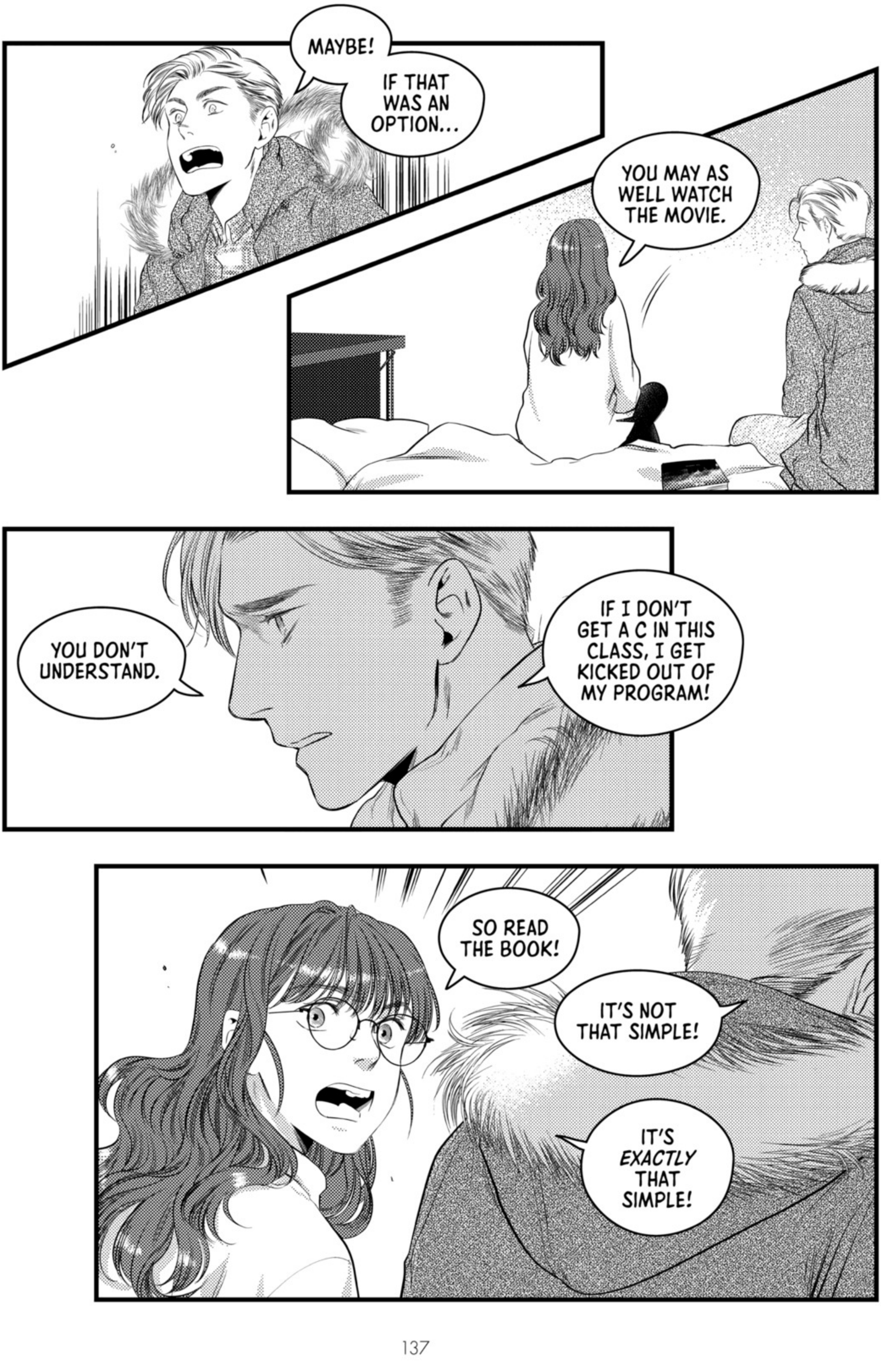

...
NO, SHE WENT OUT HOURS AGO...

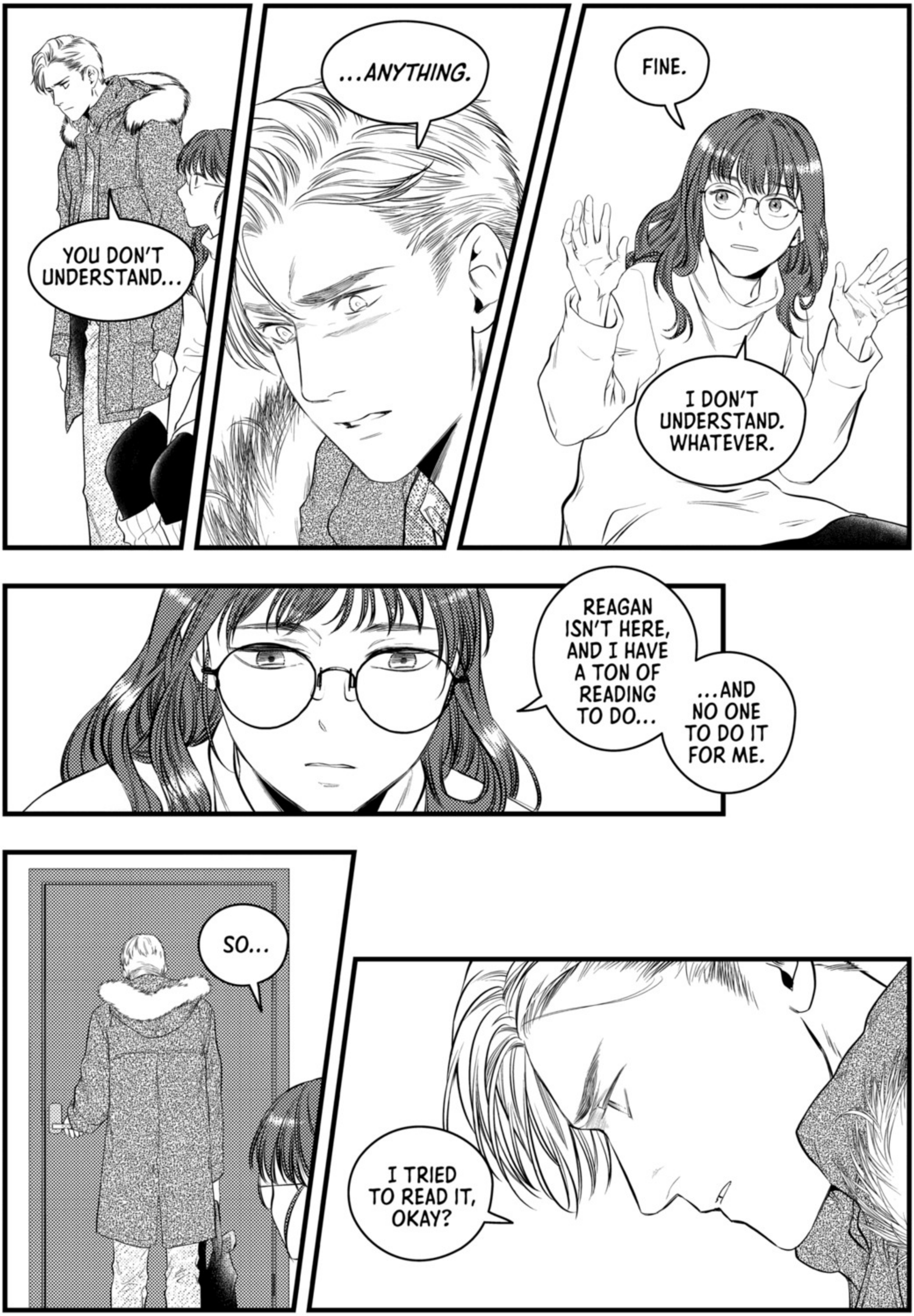

WITH A GIANT GUY NAMED CHANCE WHO PLAYS LOTS OF INTRAMURAL FOOTBALL.
SHF
FUCK.
WHAT'S WRONG?
IS LEVI JEALOUS?

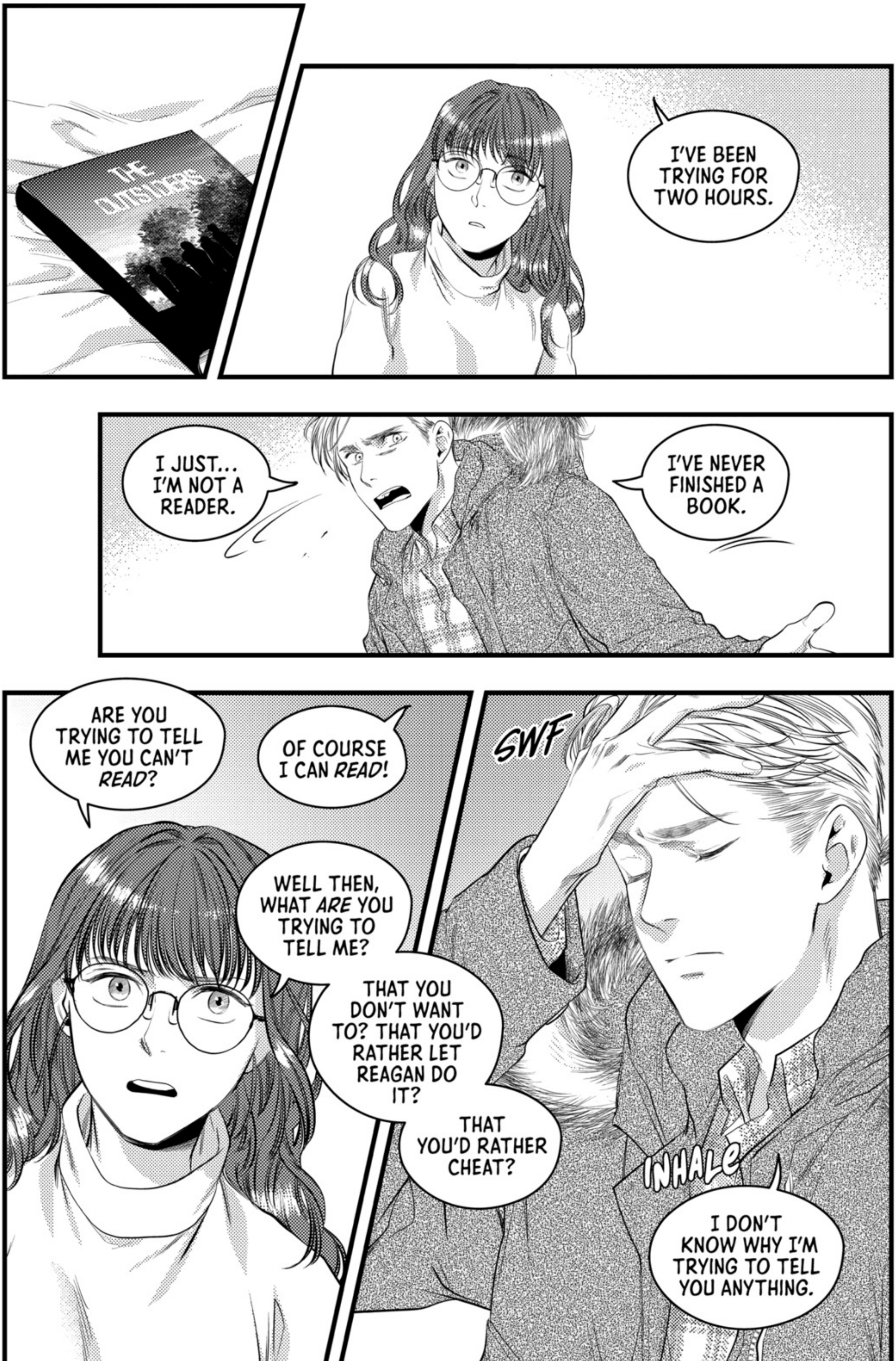

I THOUGHT HE KNEW REAGAN SAW OTHER GUYS...
I THOUGHT THEY HAD AN ARRANGEMENT.
SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO STUDY WITH ME.
OH...
WELL, YOU CAN STILL STUDY HERE IF YOU WANT.
NO.
I NEED HER HELP.
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO STUDY LAST NIGHT AND SHE PUT ME OFF–
AND THE TEST IS TOMORROW AND–
FWSHHH

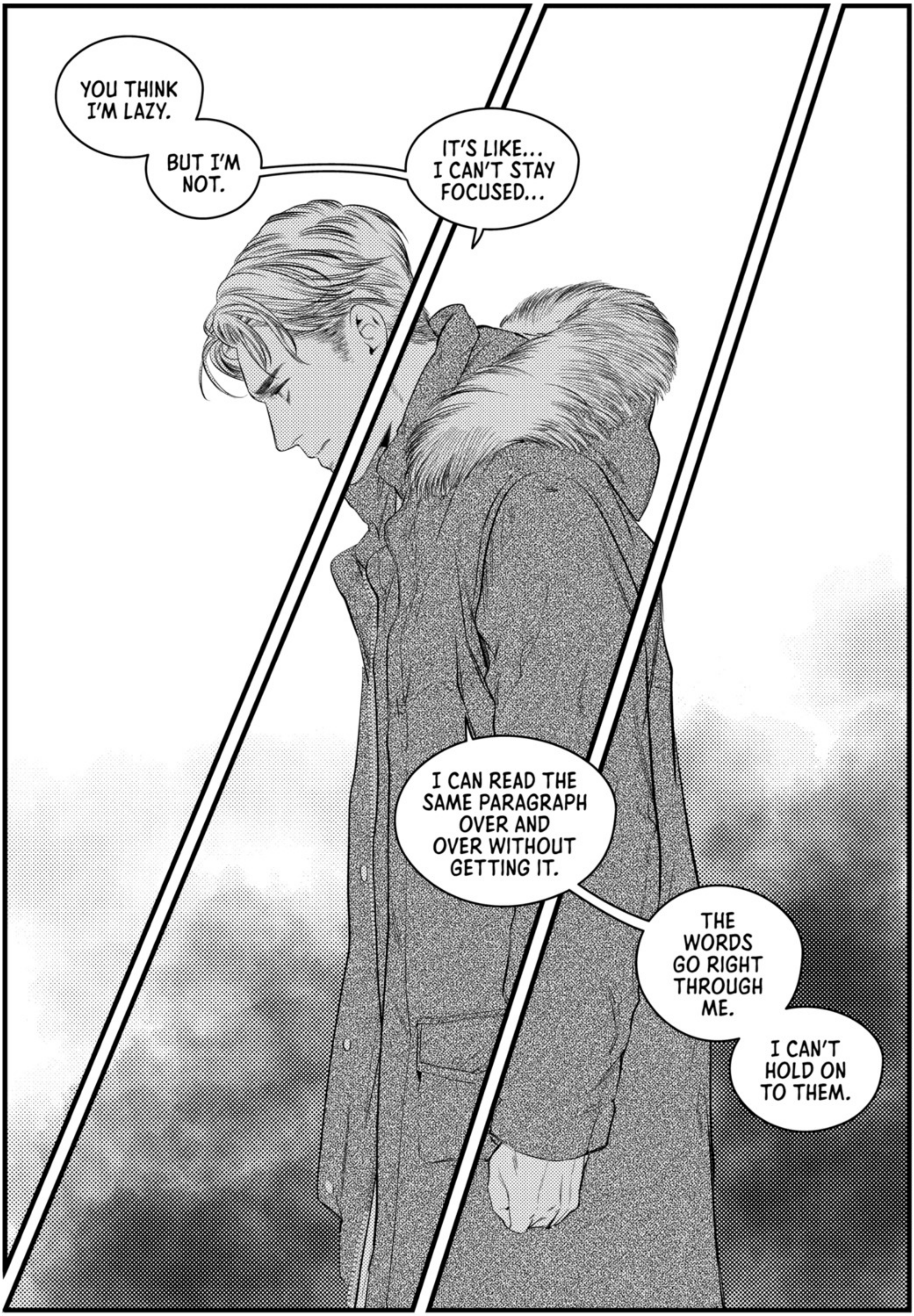

FWUMP
REAGAN SAID SHE'D STUDY WITH ME.
FLIP
THE OUTSIDERS?
THE OUTSIDERS
YEAH— HAVE YOU READ IT?
NO— HAVE YOU?
NO.

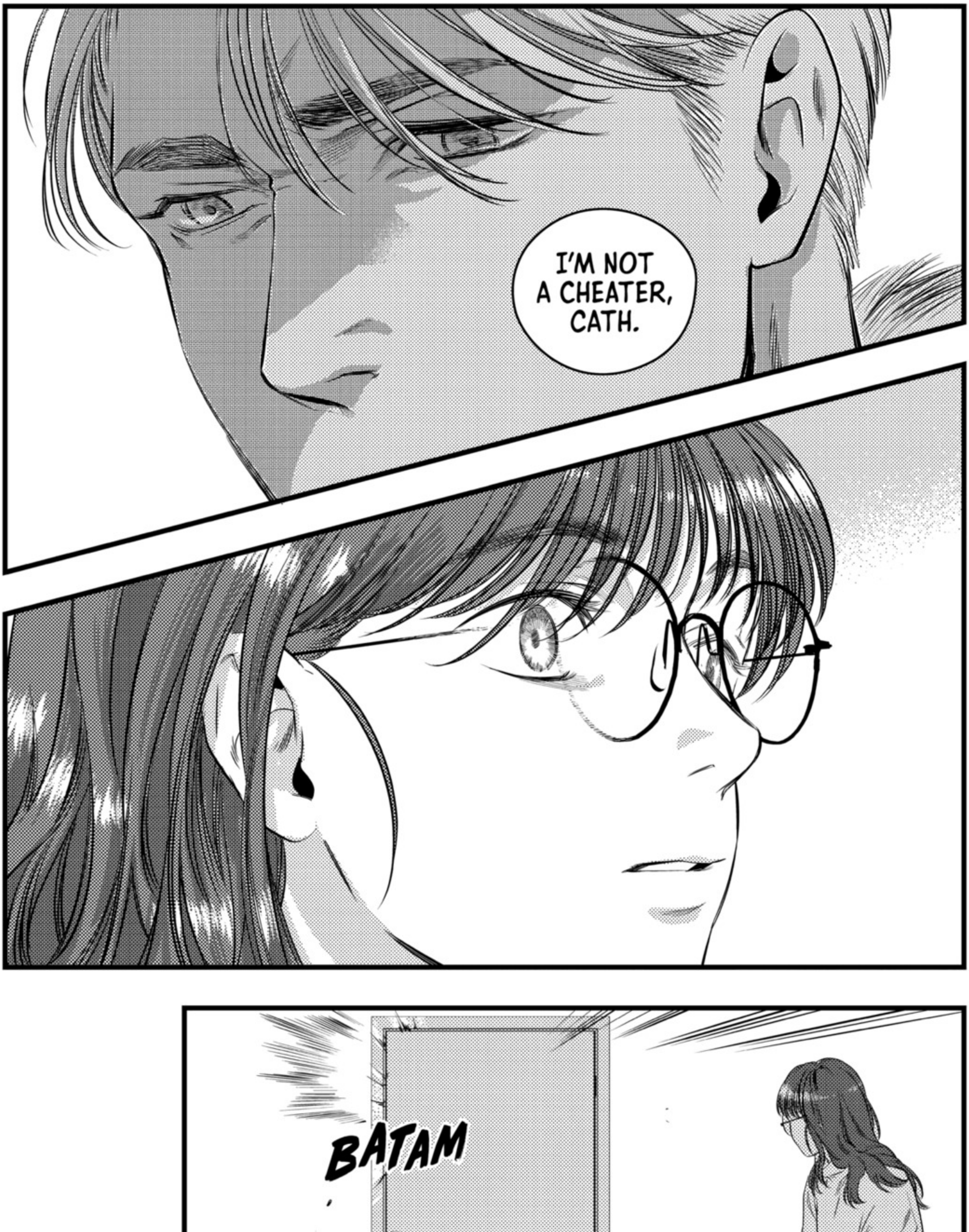

SO READ IT.
YOUR TEST IS TOMORROW? YOU HAVE TIME.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I *HAVE* TO PASS THIS TEST.
AND I TOLD YOU—I'M NOT MUCH OF A BOOK PERSON.
"I'M NOT A BOOK PERSON," HE SAYS.
LIKE BOOKS ARE THE SAME AS "RICH DESSERTS" OR "SCARY MOVIES."
PMF
S.E. HINTON
YEAH, BUT THIS IS FOR SCHOOL.
WERE YOU EXPECTING REAGAN TO JUST TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY?
WOULD YOU LET HER TAKE THE TEST FOR YOU?

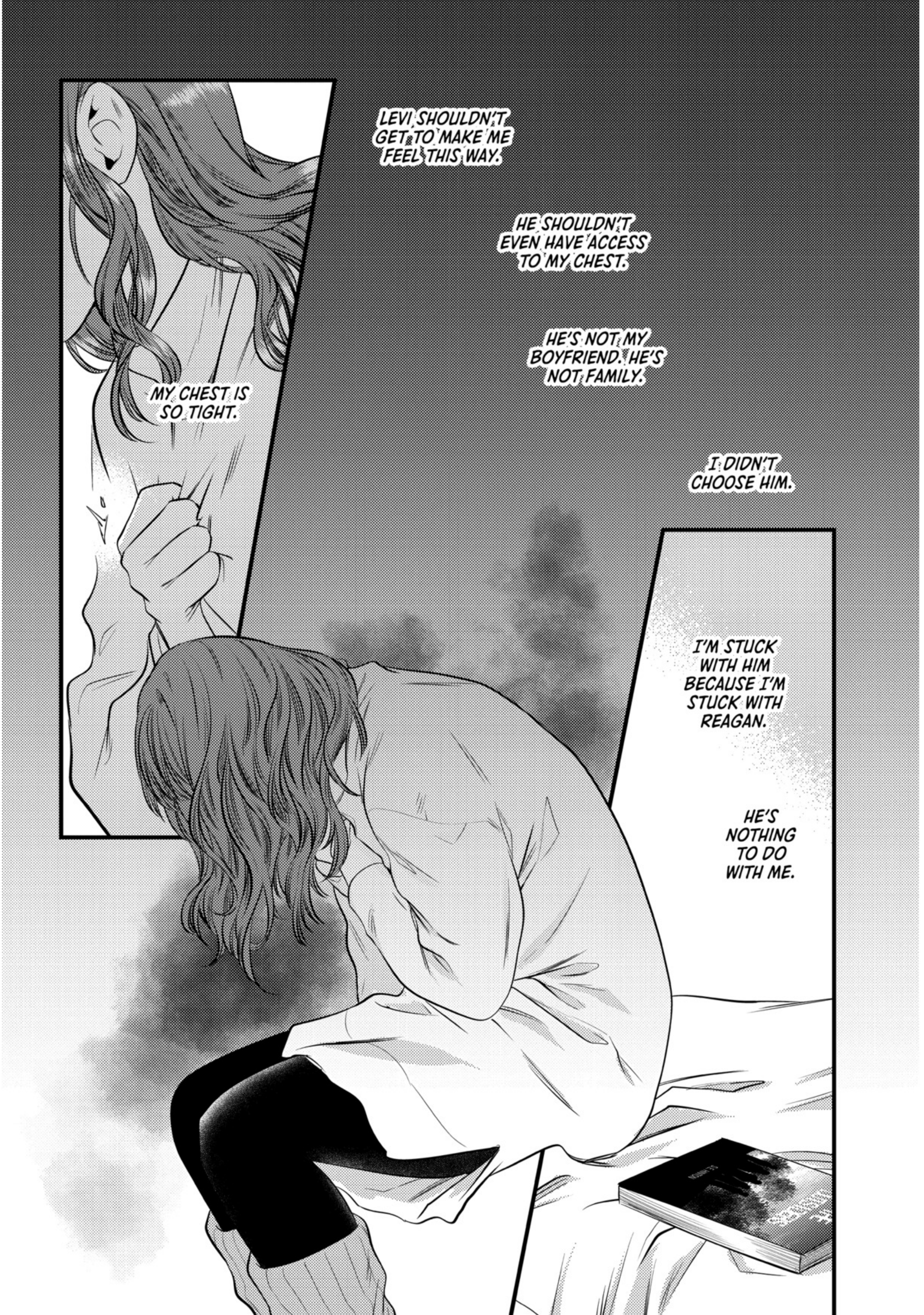

MAYBE!
IF THAT WAS AN OPTION...
YOU MAY AS WELL WATCH THE MOVIE.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
IF I DON'T GET A C IN THIS CLASS, I GET KICKED OUT OF MY PROGRAM!
SO READ THE BOOK!
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE!
IT'S *EXACTLY* THAT SIMPLE!

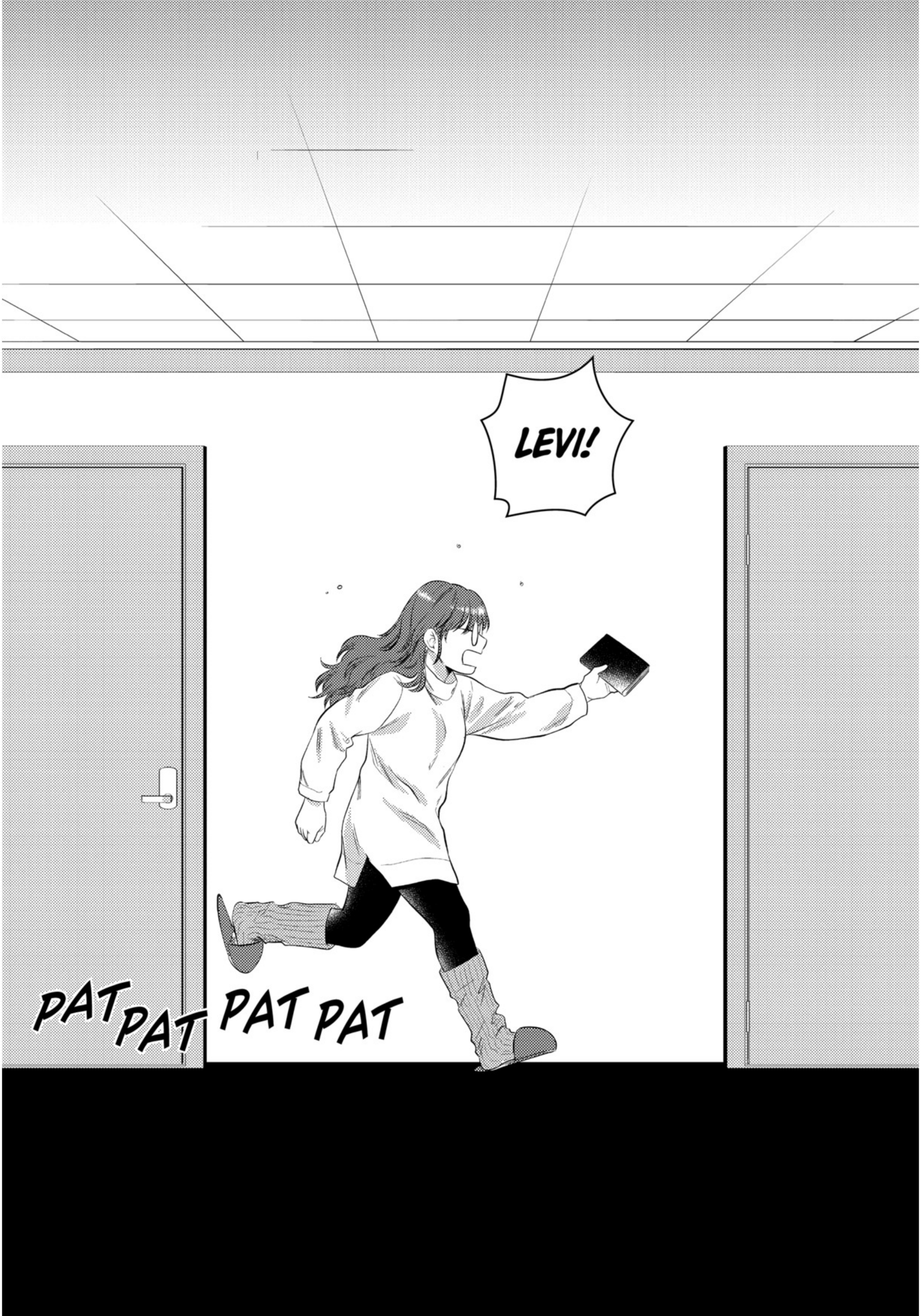

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...
...ANYTHING.
FINE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHATEVER.
REAGAN ISN'T HERE, AND I HAVE A TON OF READING TO DO...
...AND NO ONE TO DO IT FOR ME.
SO...
I TRIED TO READ IT, OKAY?

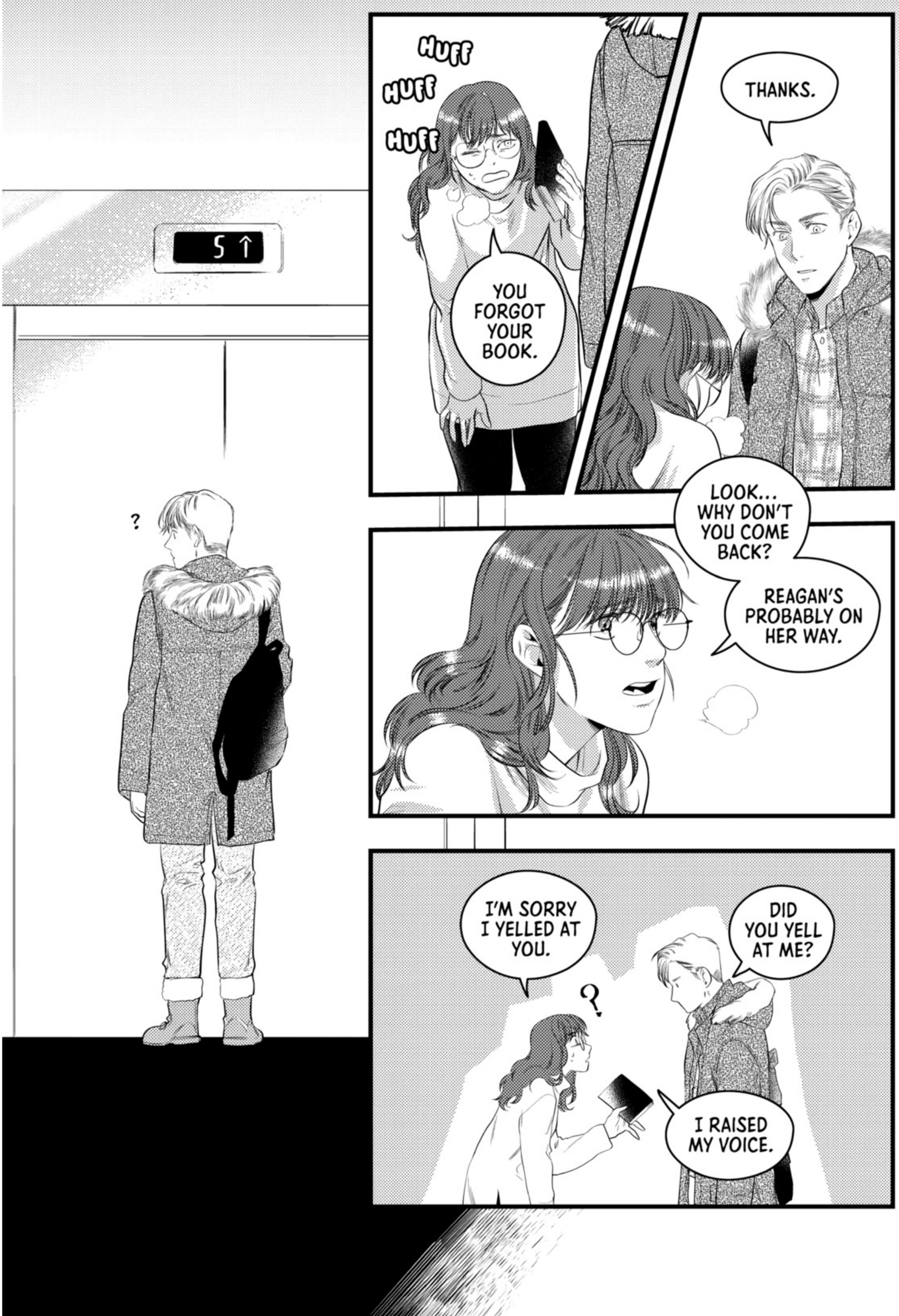

THE OUTSIDERS
I'VE BEEN TRYING FOR TWO HOURS.
I JUST... I'M NOT A READER.
I'VE NEVER FINISHED A BOOK.
ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME YOU CAN'T *READ*?
OF COURSE I CAN *READ*!
SWF
WELL THEN, WHAT *ARE* YOU TRYING TO TELL ME?
THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO? THAT YOU'D RATHER LET REAGAN DO IT?
THAT YOU'D RATHER CHEAT?
INHALE
I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU ANYTHING.

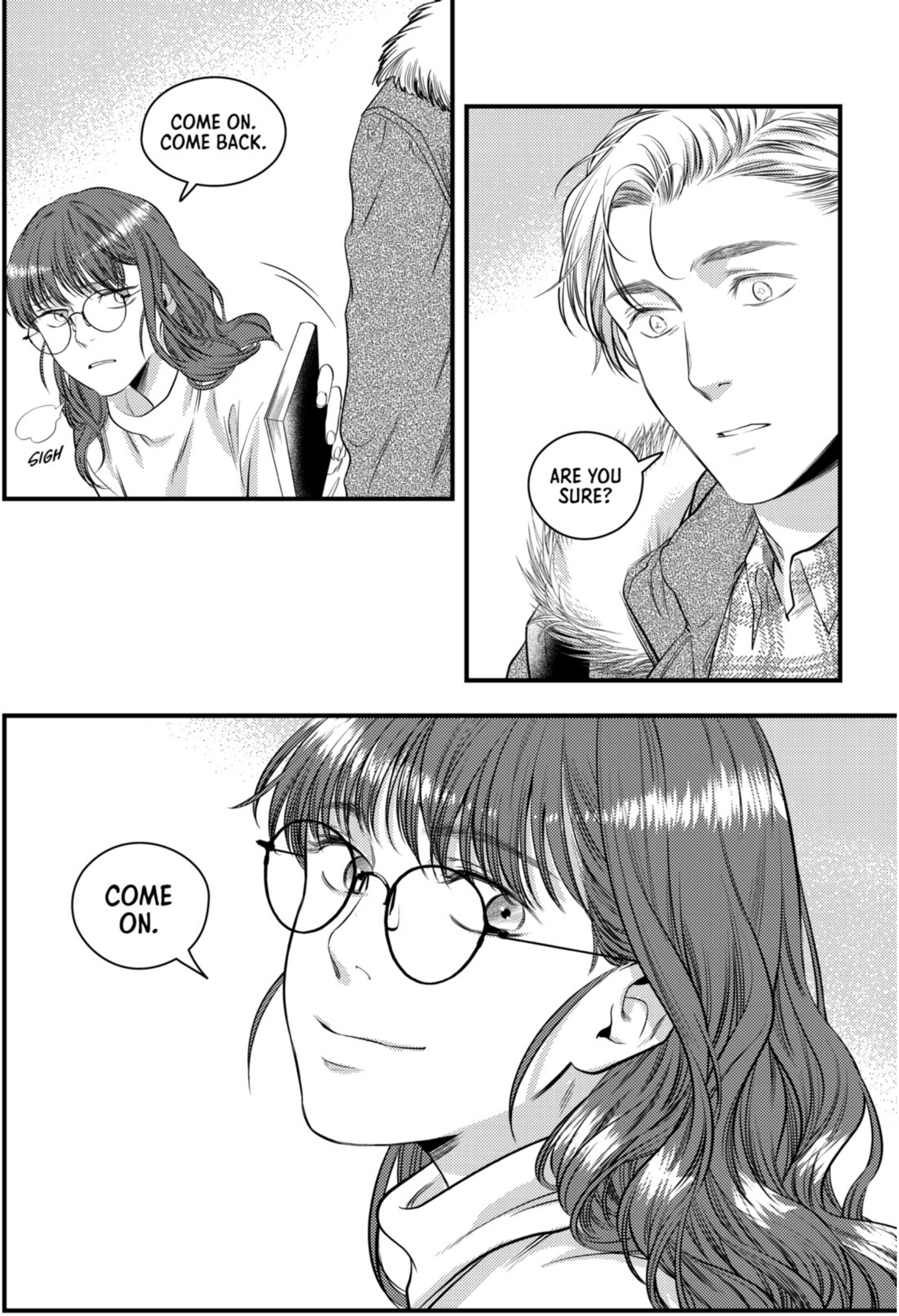

YOU THINK I'M LAZY.
BUT I'M NOT.
IT'S LIKE... I CAN'T STAY FOCUSED...
I CAN READ THE SAME PARAGRAPH OVER AND OVER WITHOUT GETTING IT.
THE WORDS GO RIGHT THROUGH ME.
I CAN'T HOLD ON TO THEM.

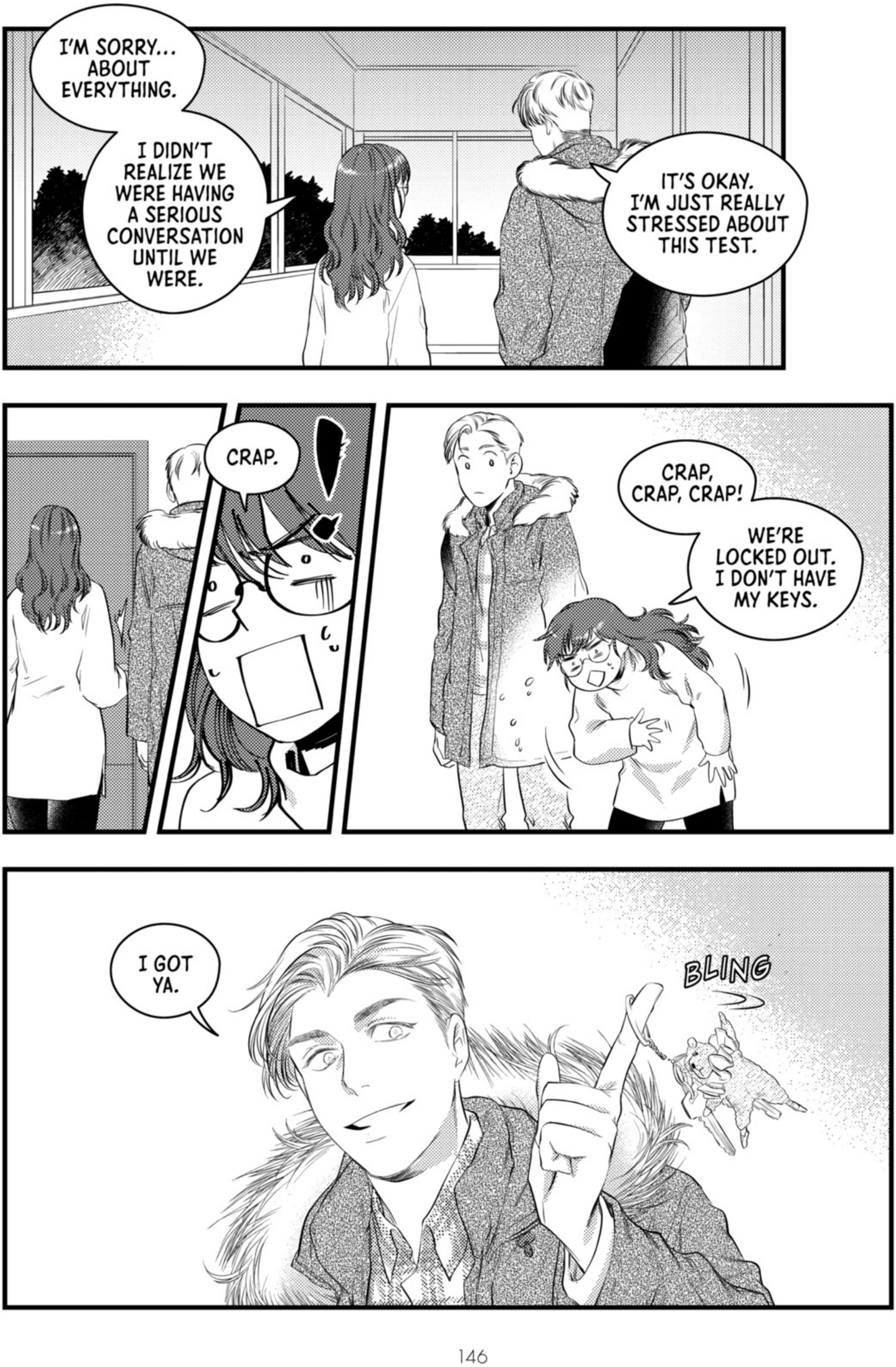

I'M NOT A CHEATER, CATH.
BATAM

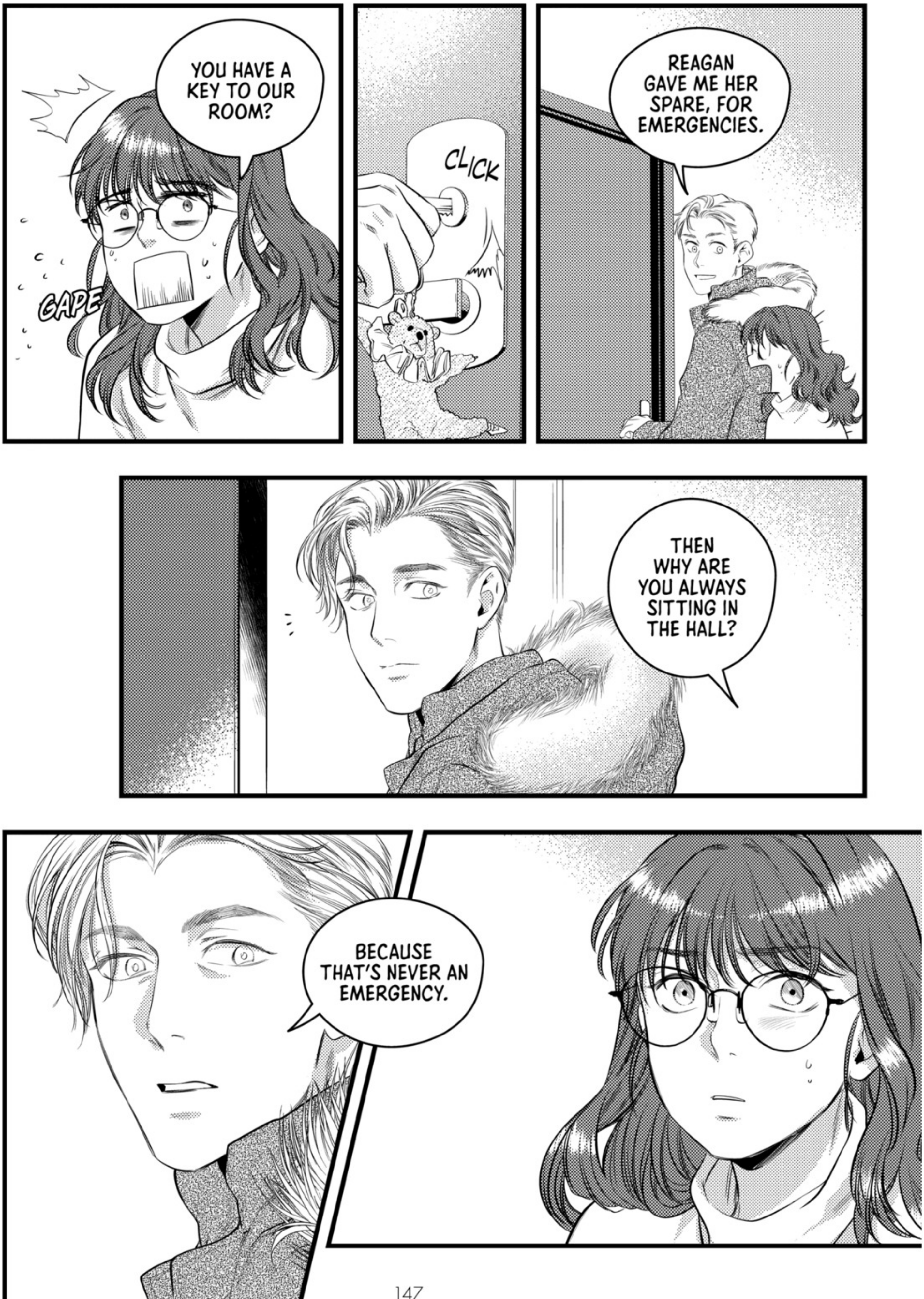

MY CHEST IS SO TIGHT.
LEVI SHOULDN'T GET TO MAKE ME FEEL THIS WAY.
HE SHOULDN'T EVEN HAVE ACCESS TO MY CHEST.
HE'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND. HE'S NOT FAMILY.
I DIDN'T CHOOSE HIM.
I'M STUCK WITH HIM BECAUSE I'M STUCK WITH REAGAN.
HE'S NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

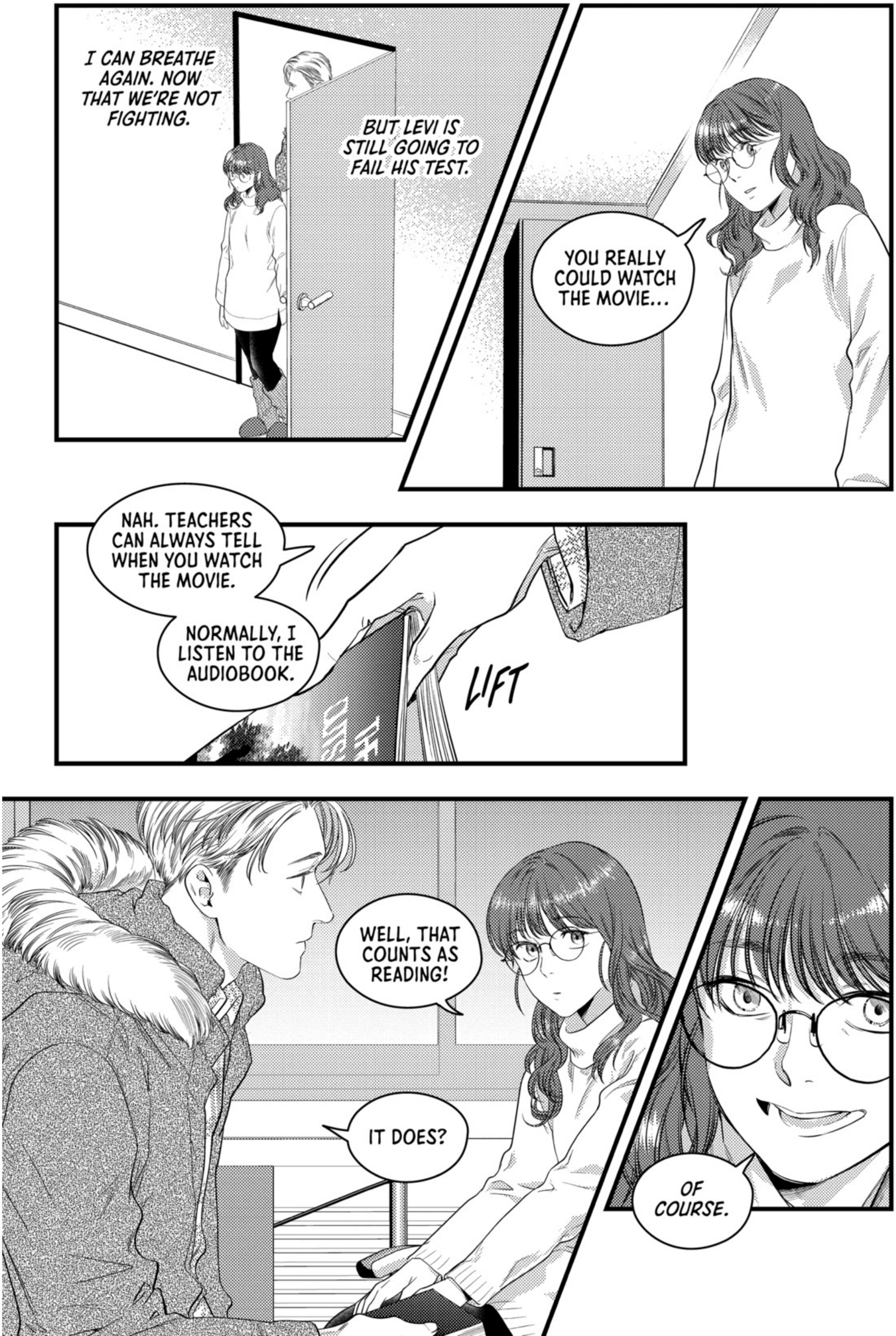

LEVI!
PAT PAT PAT PAT

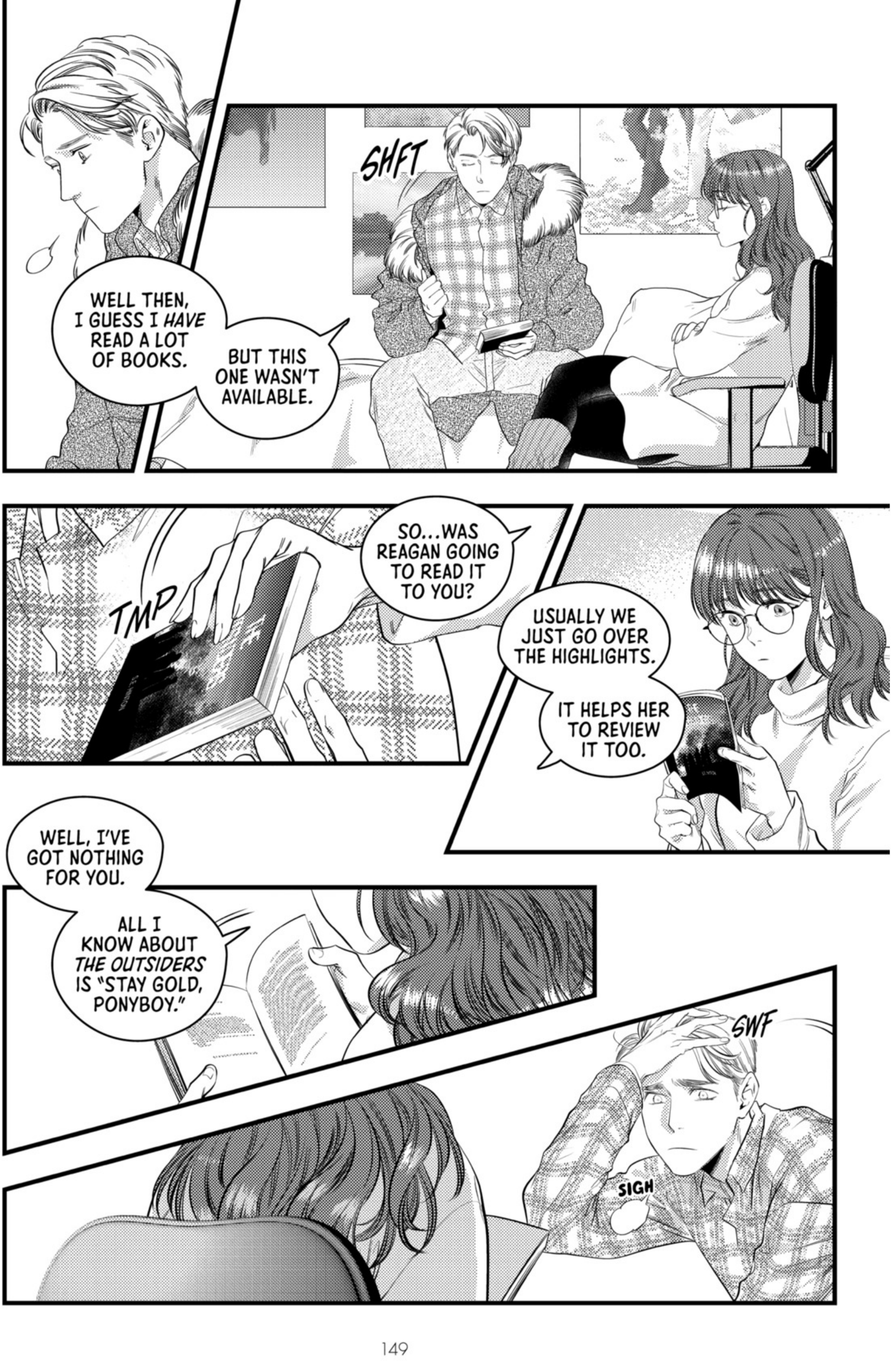

5 ↑
?
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
YOU FORGOT YOUR BOOK.
THANKS.
LOOK... WHY DON'T YOU COME BACK?
REAGAN'S PROBABLY ON HER WAY.
I'M SORRY I YELLED AT YOU.
?
DID YOU YELL AT ME?
I RAISED MY VOICE.

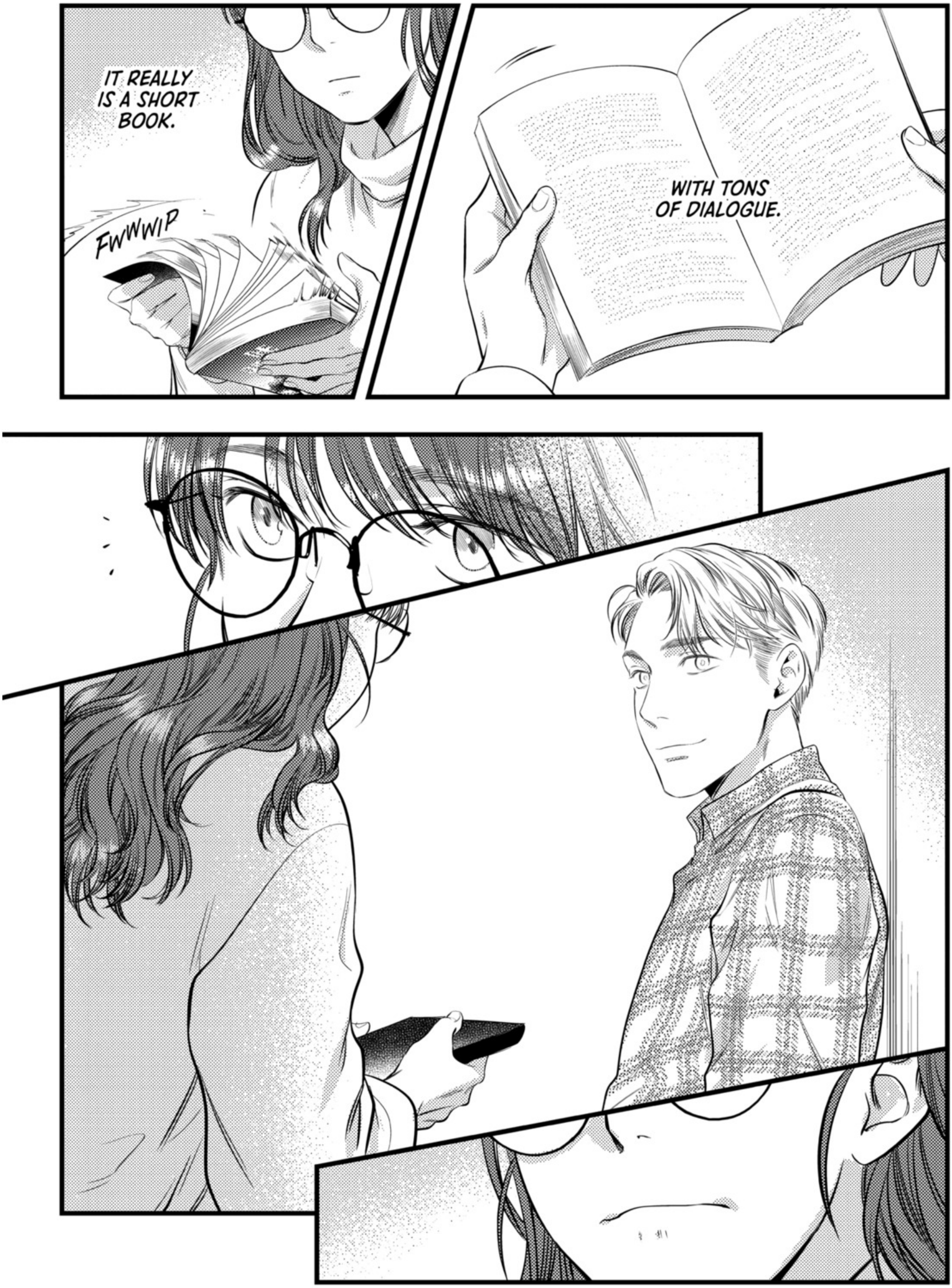

COME ON.
COME BACK.
SIGH
ARE YOU
SURE?
COME
ON.

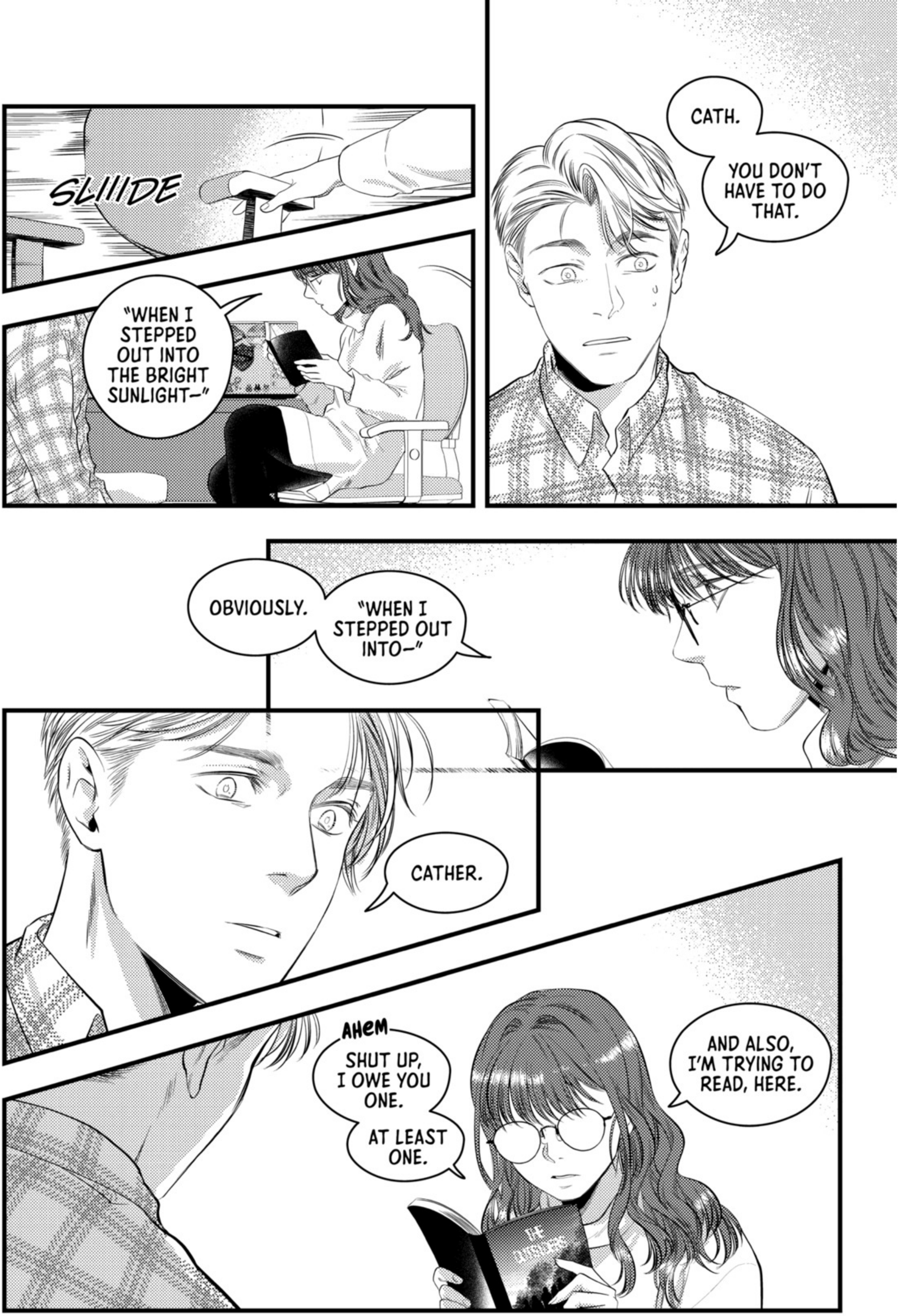

I'M SORRY... ABOUT EVERYTHING.
I DIDN'T REALIZE WE WERE HAVING A SERIOUS CONVERSATION UNTIL WE WERE.
IT'S OKAY. I'M JUST REALLY STRESSED ABOUT THIS TEST.
CRAP.
!
CRAP, CRAP, CRAP!
WE'RE LOCKED OUT. I DON'T HAVE MY KEYS.
I GOT YA.
BLING

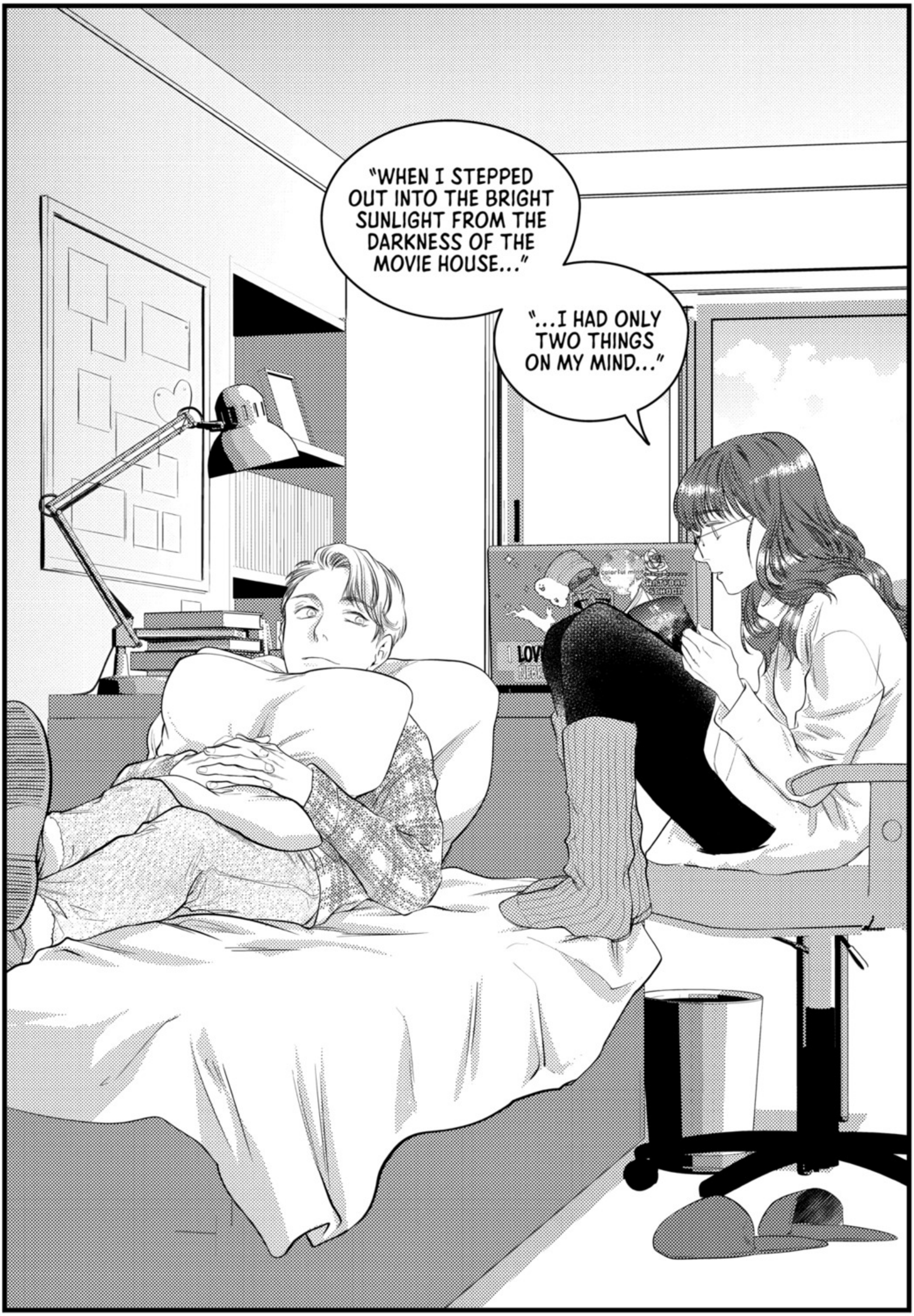

YOU HAVE A KEY TO OUR ROOM?
GAPE
CLICK
REAGAN GAVE ME HER SPARE, FOR EMERGENCIES.
THEN WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SITTING IN THE HALL?
BECAUSE THAT'S NEVER AN EMERGENCY.

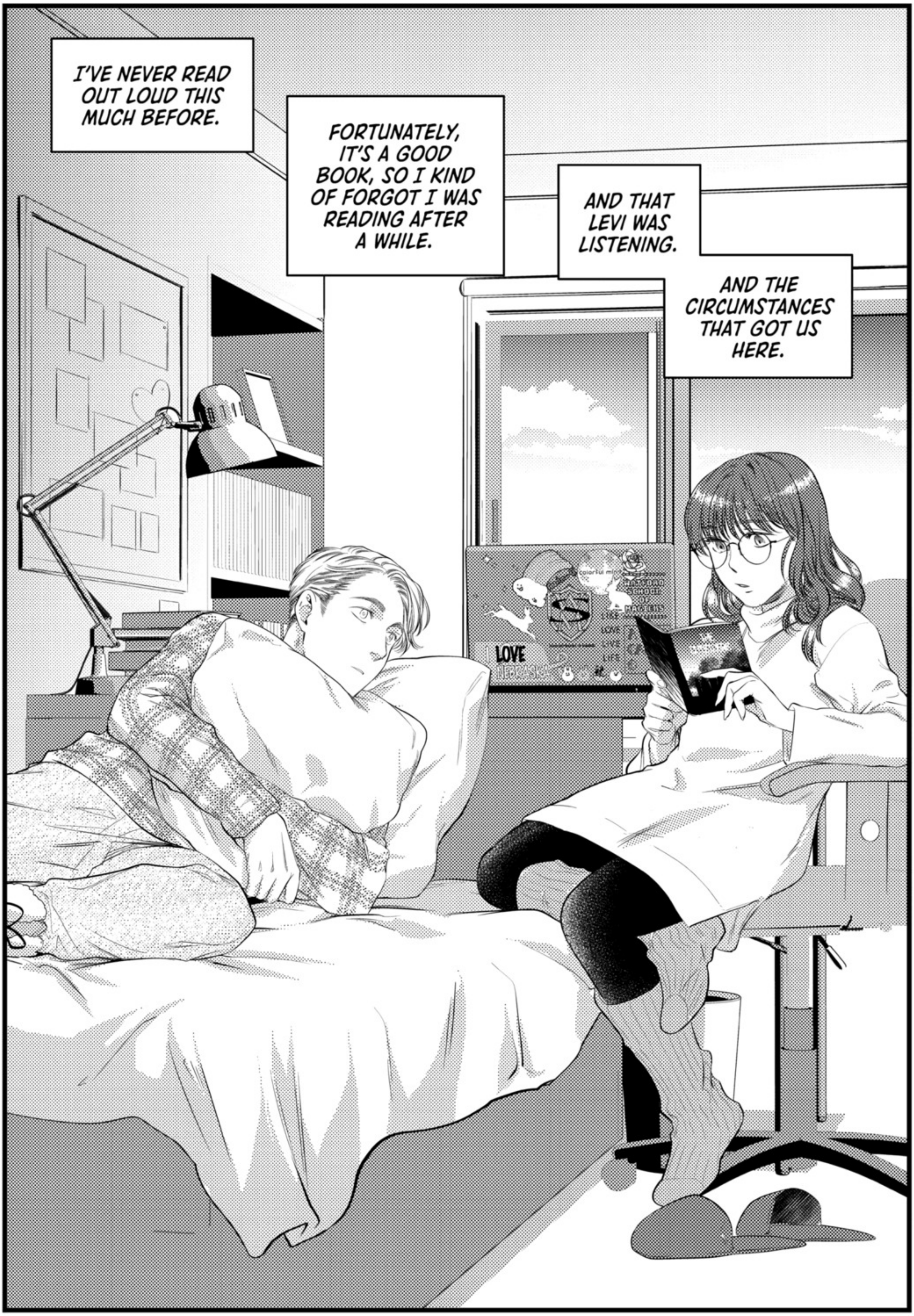

I CAN BREATHE AGAIN. NOW THAT WE'RE NOT FIGHTING.
BUT LEVI IS STILL GOING TO FAIL HIS TEST.
YOU REALLY COULD WATCH THE MOVIE...
NAH. TEACHERS CAN ALWAYS TELL WHEN YOU WATCH THE MOVIE.
NORMALLY, I LISTEN TO THE AUDIOBOOK.
LIFT
WELL, THAT COUNTS AS READING!
IT DOES?
OF COURSE.

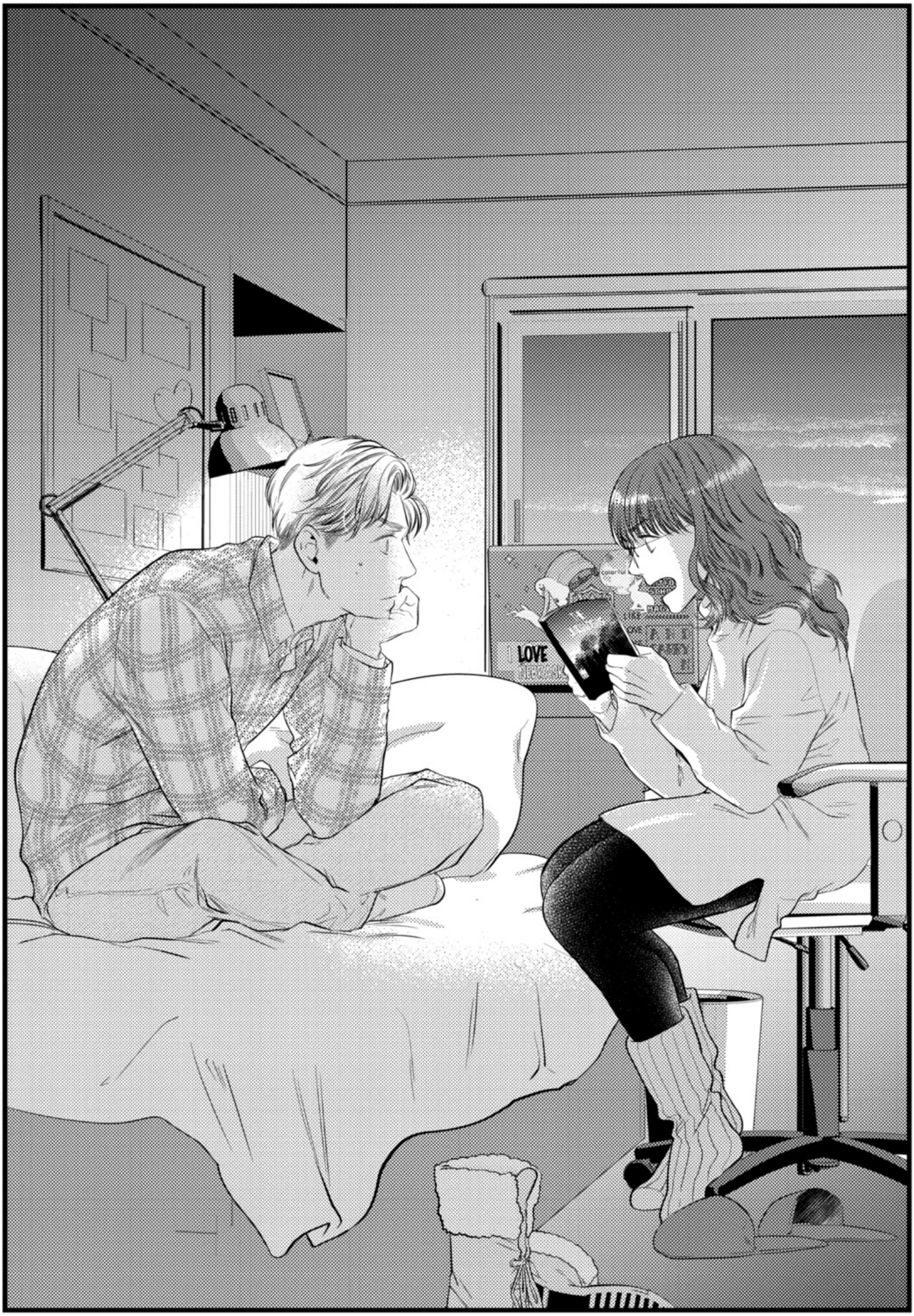

WELL THEN, I GUESS I *HAVE* READ A LOT OF BOOKS.
SHFT
BUT THIS ONE WASN'T AVAILABLE.
TMP
SO...WAS REAGAN GOING TO READ IT TO YOU?
USUALLY WE JUST GO OVER THE HIGHLIGHTS.
IT HELPS HER TO REVIEW IT TOO.
WELL, I'VE GOT NOTHING FOR YOU.
ALL I KNOW ABOUT *THE OUTSIDERS* IS "STAY GOLD, PONYBOY."
SWF
SIGH

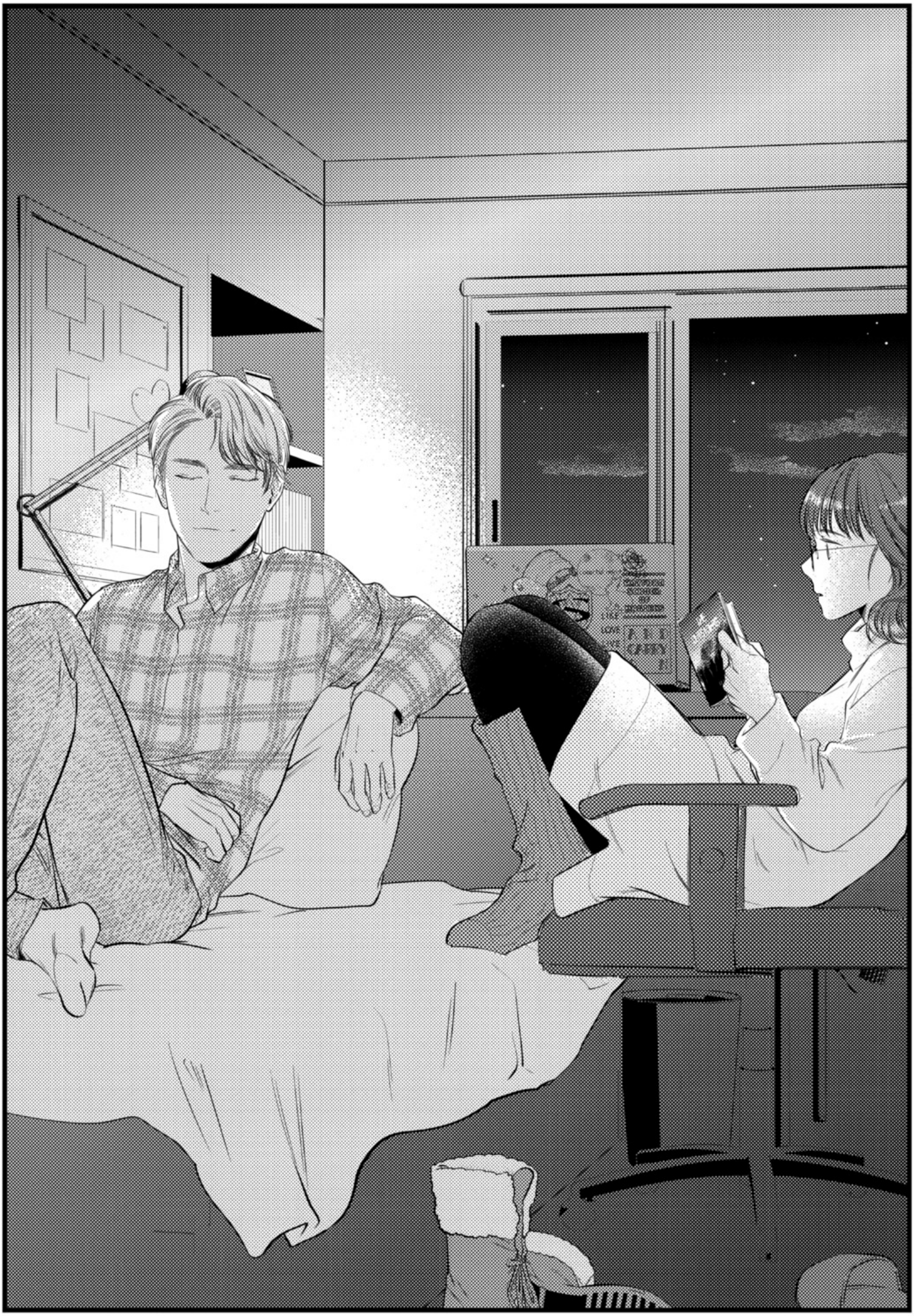

IT REALLY IS A SHORT BOOK.
FWWWIP
WITH TONS OF DIALOGUE.

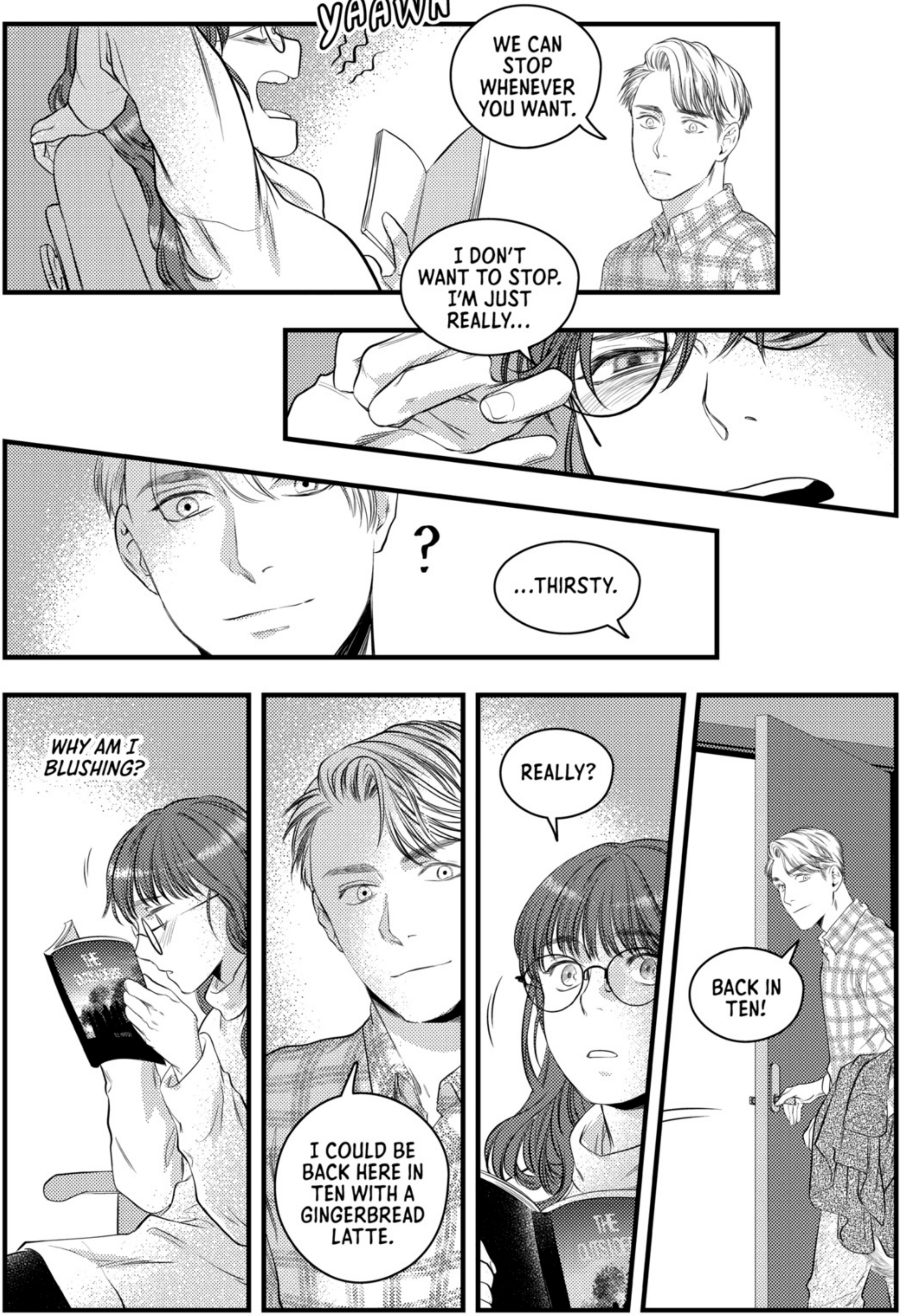

SLIIIDE
"WHEN I STEPPED OUT INTO THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT–"
CATH.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
OBVIOUSLY.
"WHEN I STEPPED OUT INTO–"
CATHER.
AHEM
SHUT UP, I OWE YOU ONE.
AT LEAST ONE.
AND ALSO, I'M TRYING TO READ, HERE.

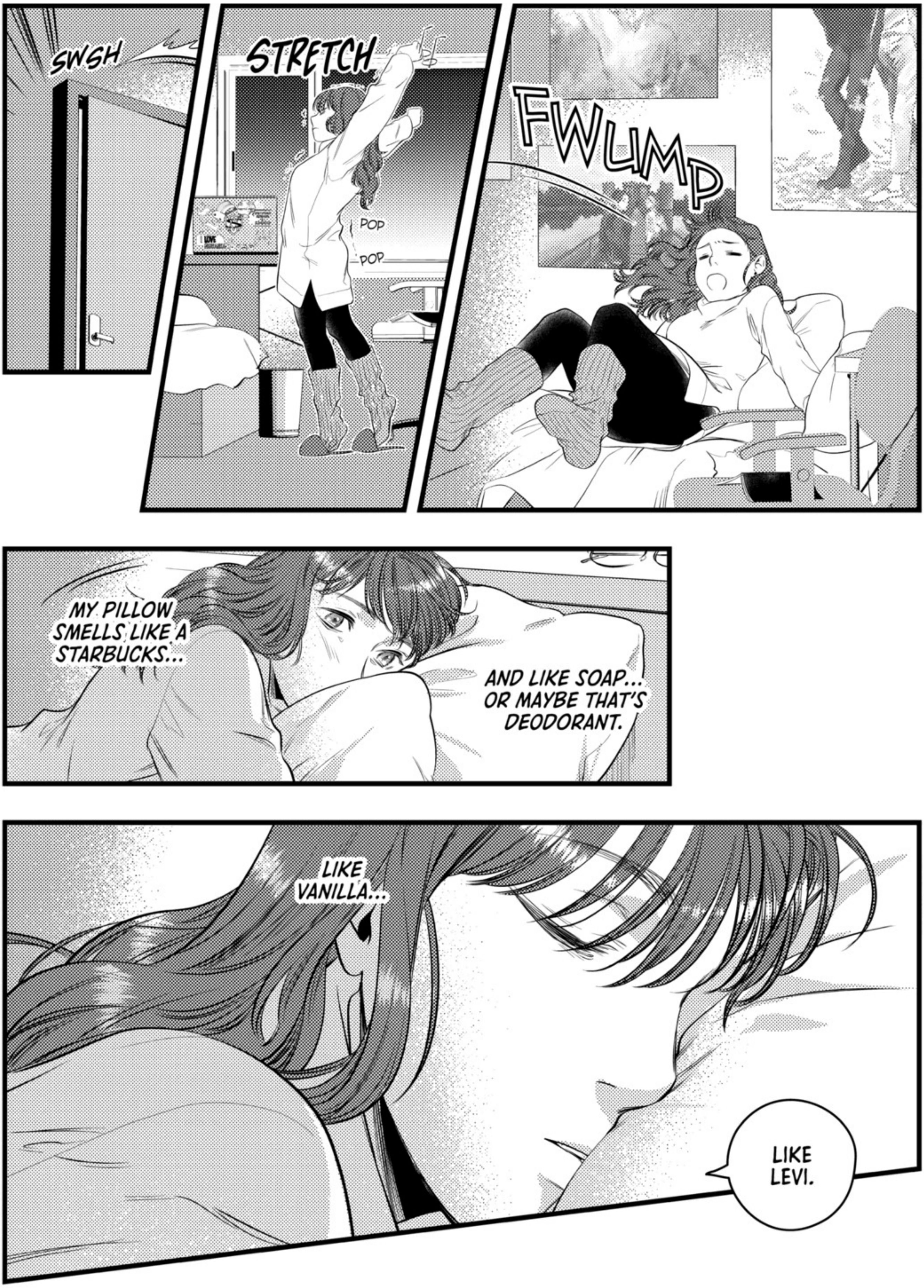

"WHEN I STEPPED OUT INTO THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE MOVIE HOUSE..."
"...I HAD ONLY TWO THINGS ON MY MIND..."

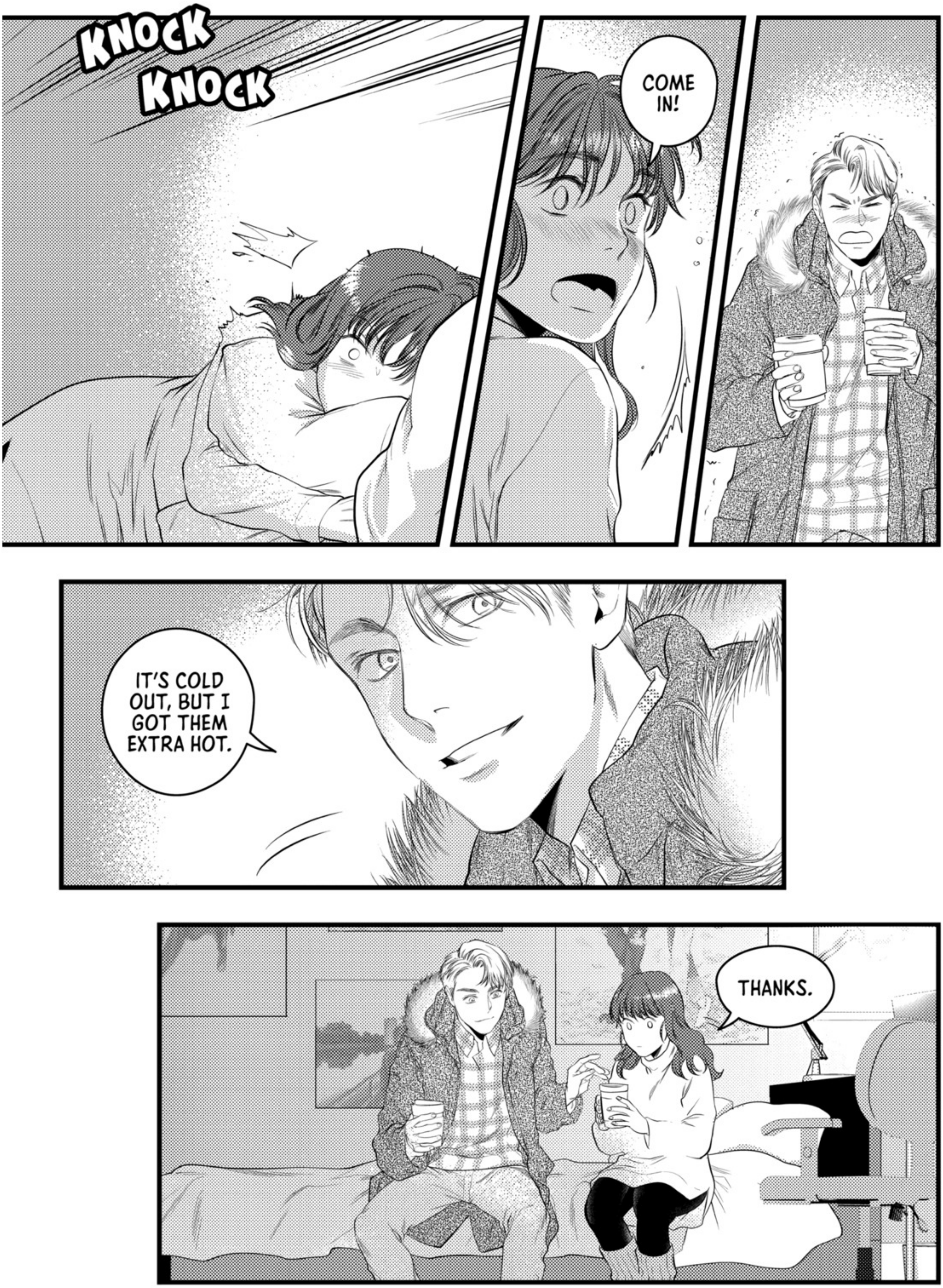

I'VE NEVER READ OUT LOUD THIS MUCH BEFORE.
FORTUNATELY, IT'S A GOOD BOOK, SO I KIND OF FORGOT I WAS READING AFTER A WHILE.
AND THAT LEVI WAS LISTENING.
AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT GOT US HERE.
I LOVE NEBRASKA
LIVE LOVE LIFE

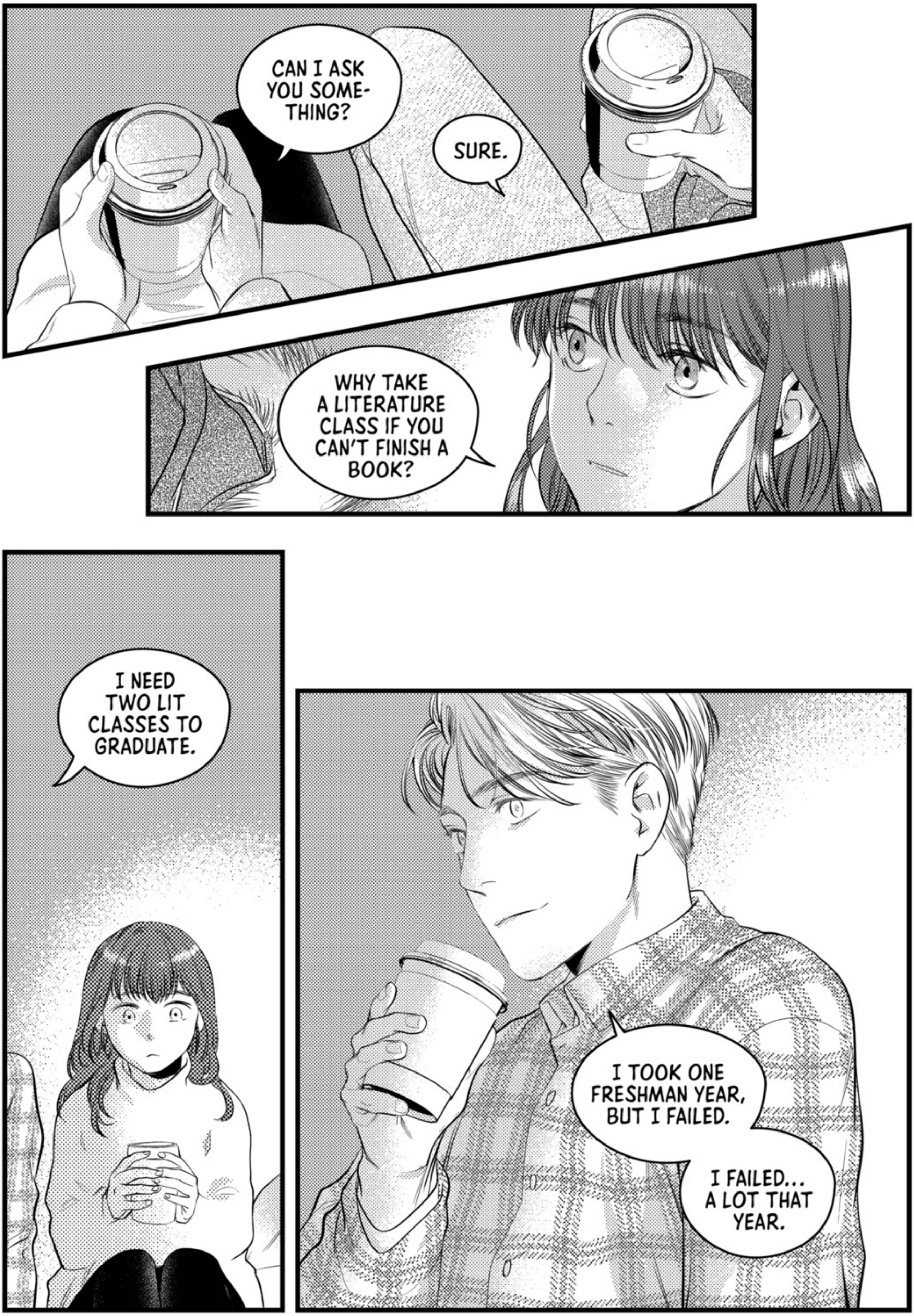

colorful
I LOVE
NEBRASK

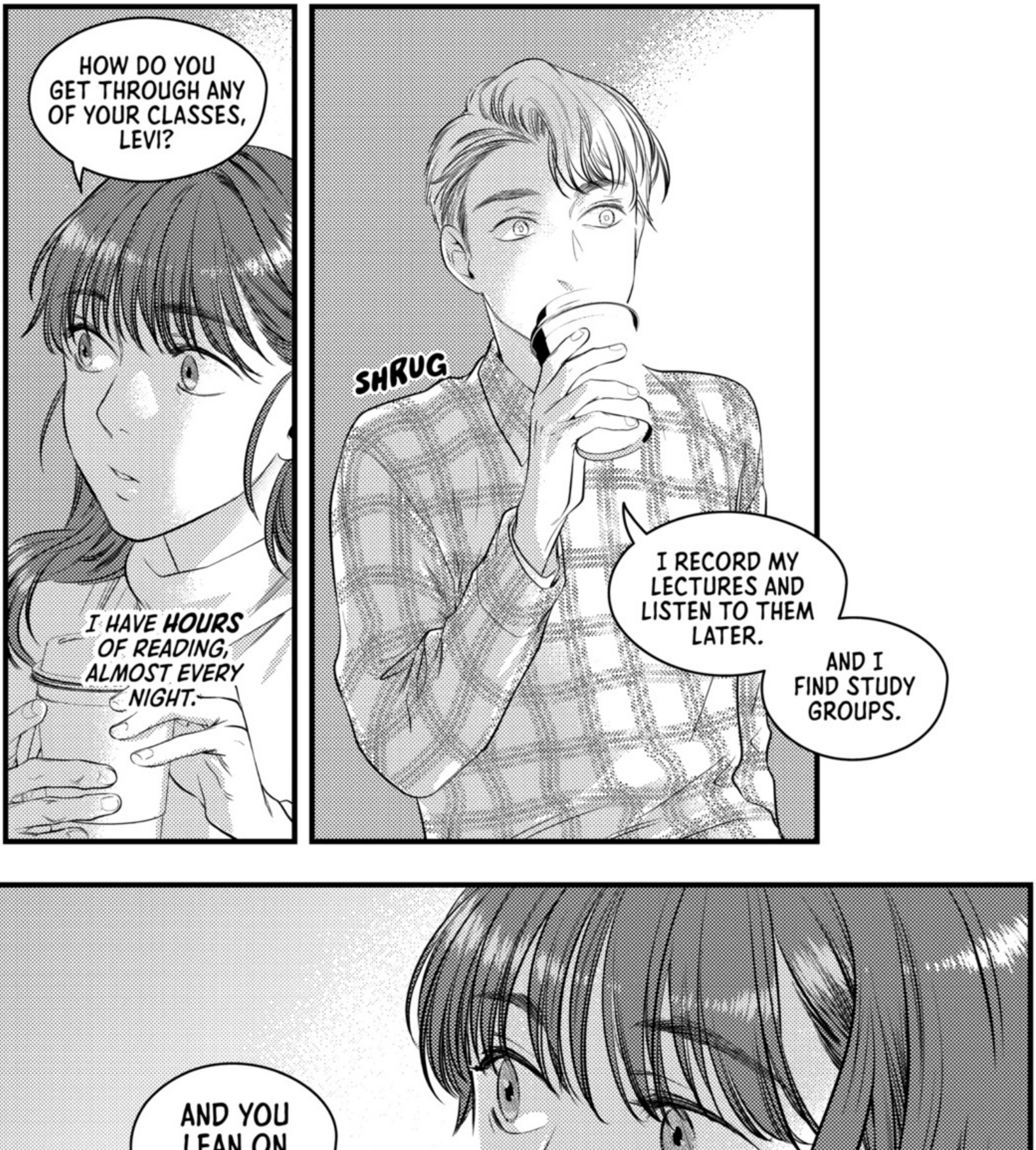

LIKE
LOVE

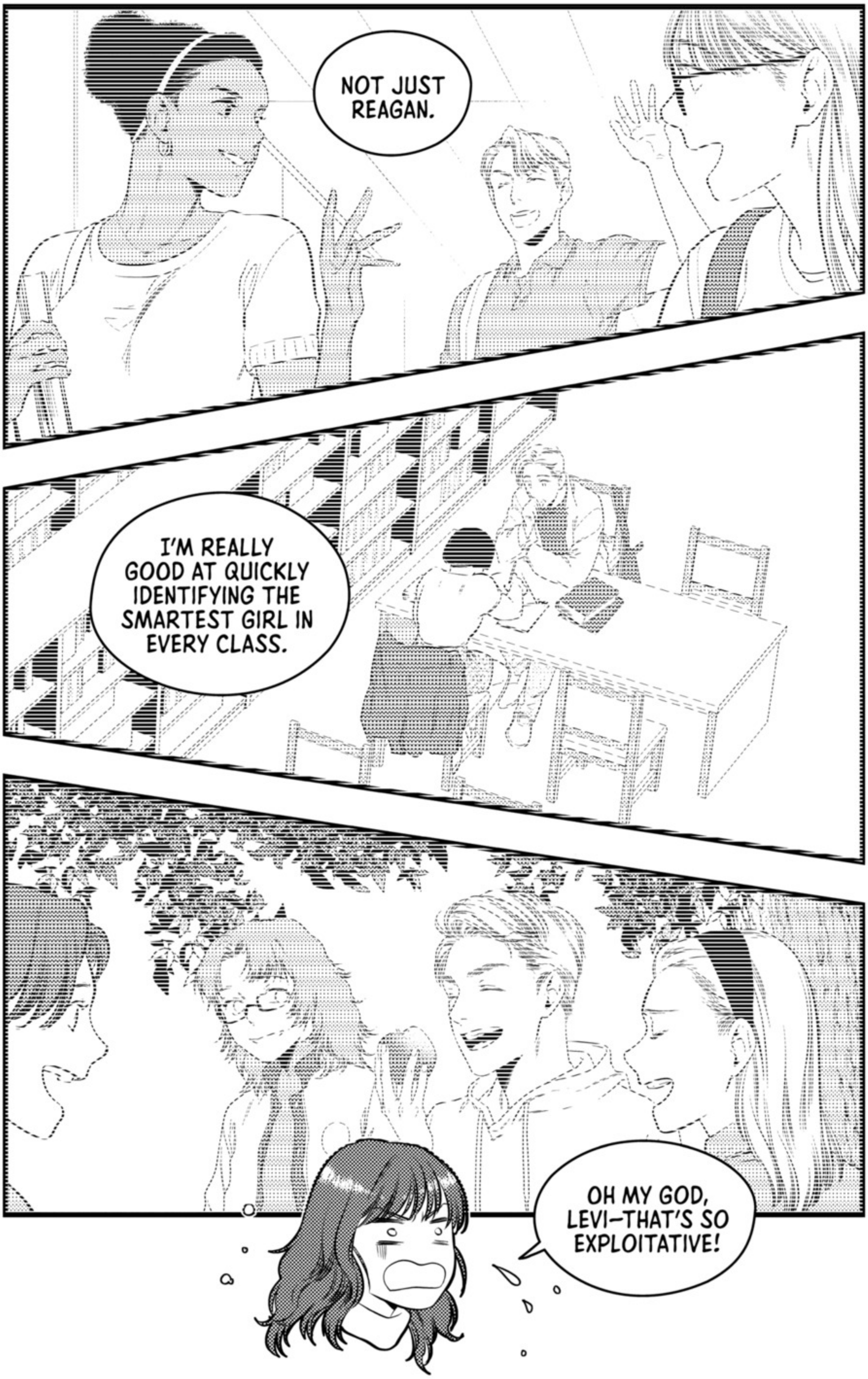

YAAWN
WE CAN STOP WHENEVER YOU WANT.
I DON'T WANT TO STOP. I'M JUST REALLY...
?
...THIRSTY.
WHY AM I BLUSHING?
I COULD BE BACK HERE IN TEN WITH A GINGERBREAD LATTE.
REALLY?
BACK IN TEN!

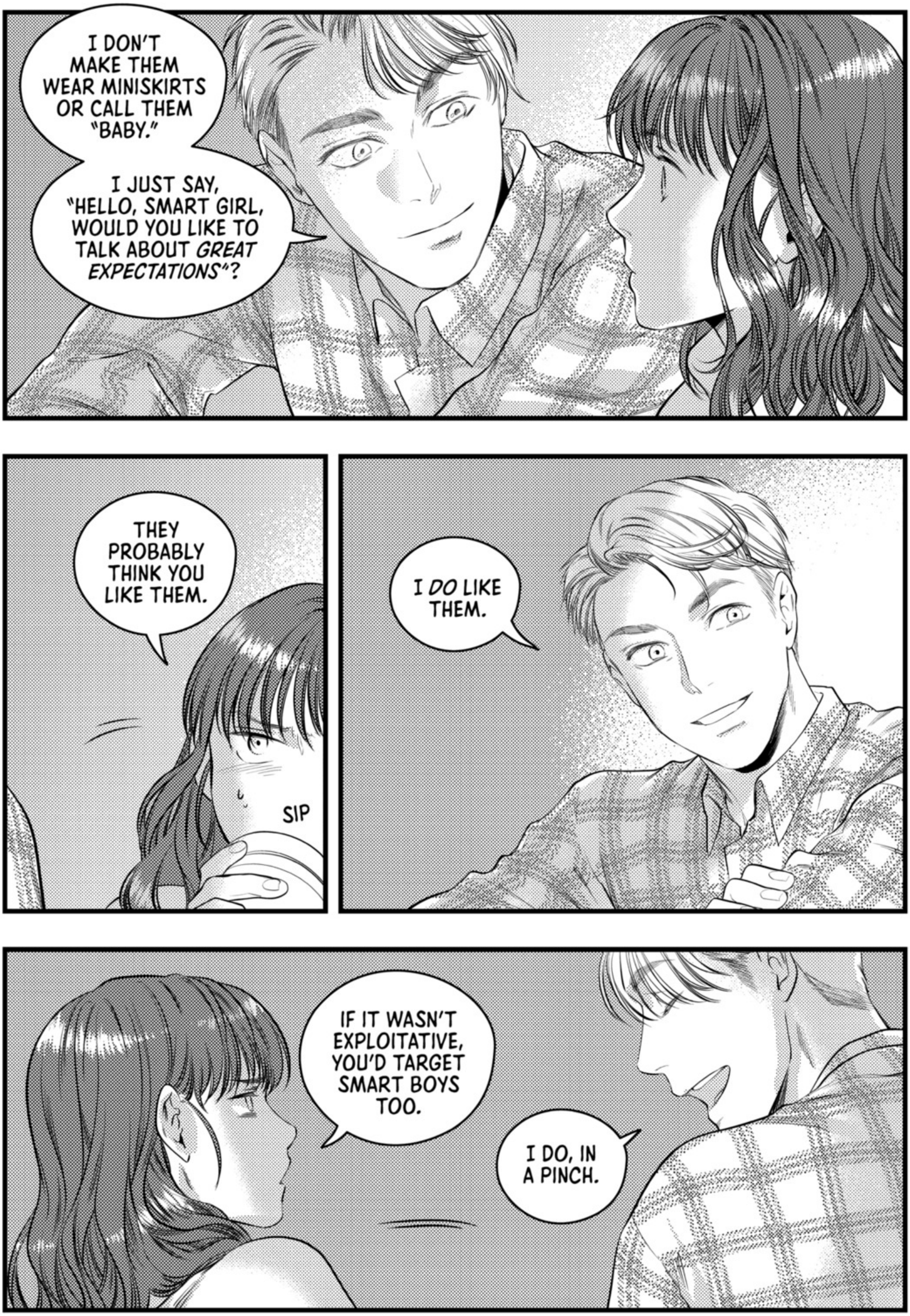

SWSH
STRETCH
POP
POP
FWUMP
MY PILLOW SMELLS LIKE A STARBUCKS...
AND LIKE SOAP... OR MAYBE THAT'S DEODORANT.
LIKE VANILLA...
LIKE LEVI.

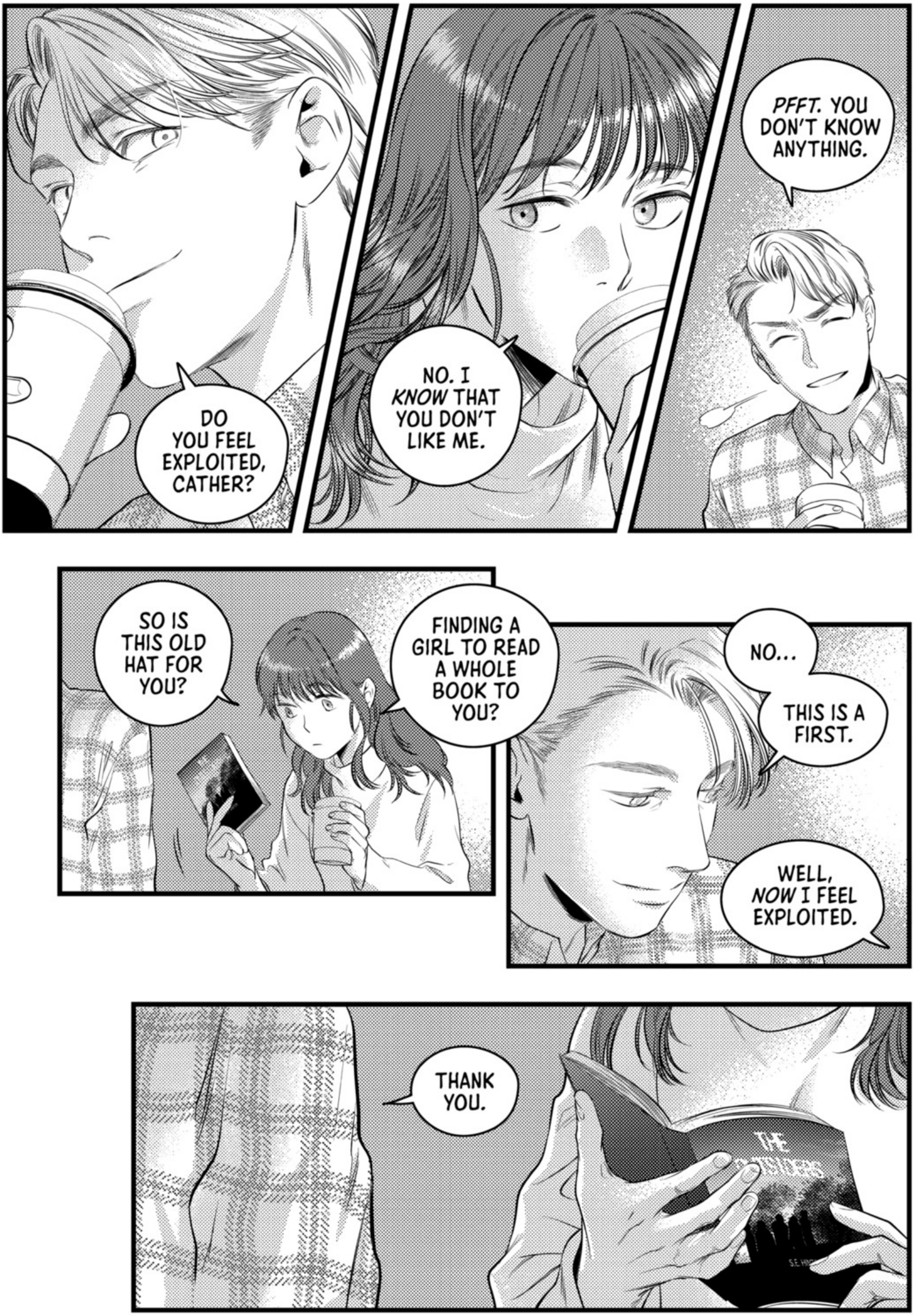

KNOCK KNOCK
COME IN!
IT'S COLD OUT, BUT I GOT THEM EXTRA HOT.
THANKS.

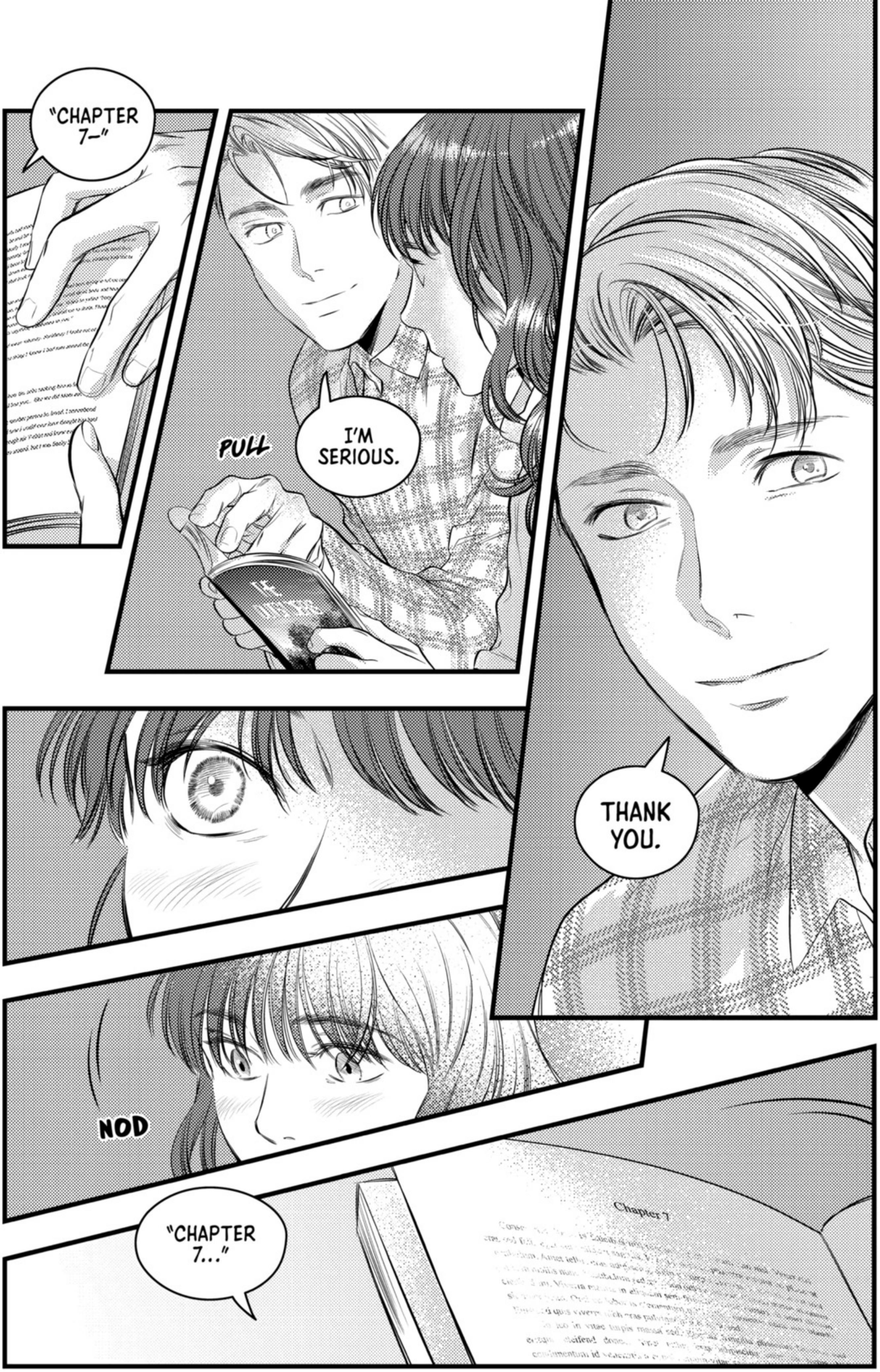

CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
SURE.
WHY TAKE A LITERATURE CLASS IF YOU CAN'T FINISH A BOOK?
I NEED TWO LIT CLASSES TO GRADUATE.
I TOOK ONE FRESHMAN YEAR, BUT I FAILED.
I FAILED... A LOT THAT YEAR.

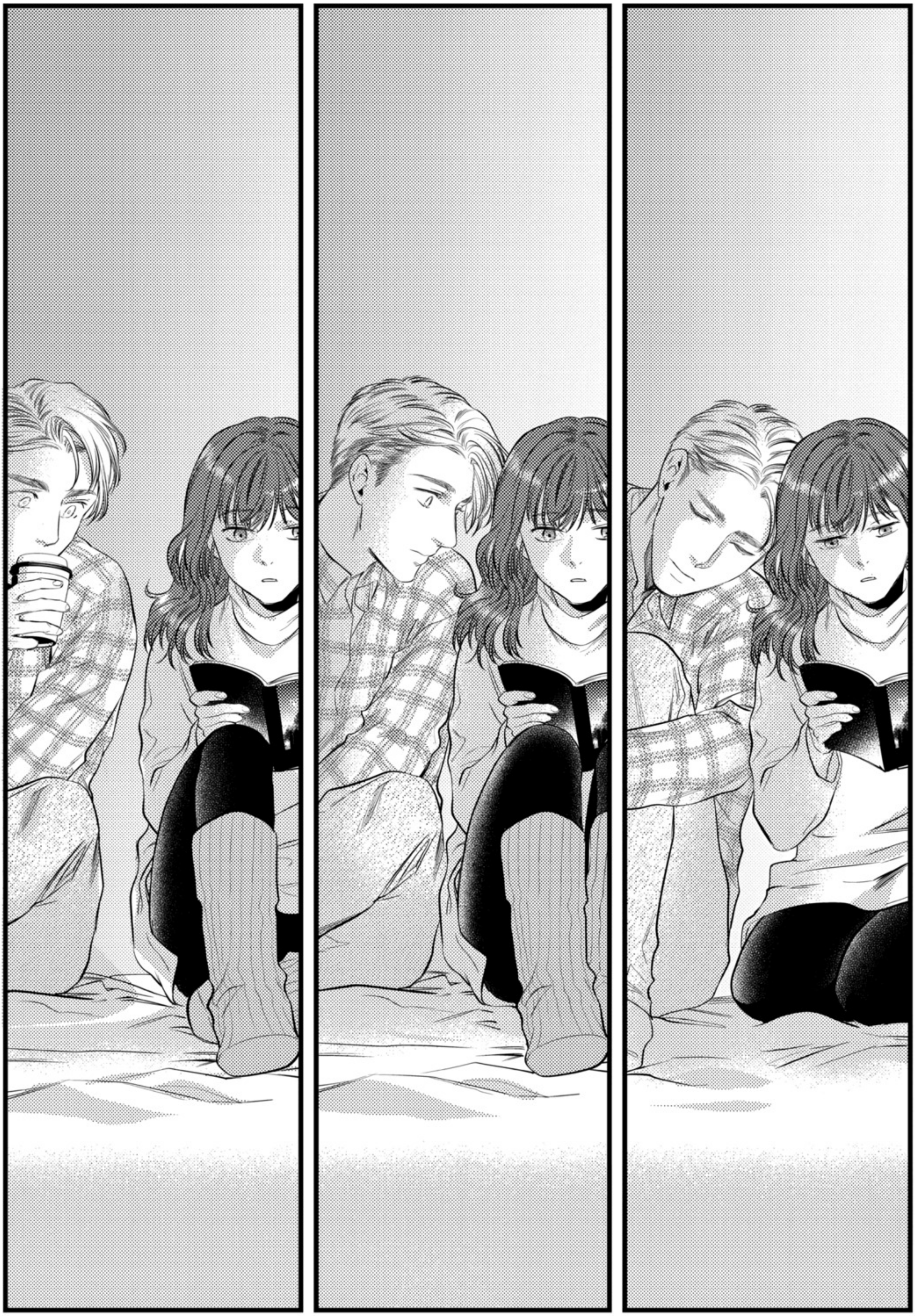

HOW DO YOU GET THROUGH ANY OF YOUR CLASSES, LEVI?
I HAVE **HOURS** OF READING, ALMOST EVERY NIGHT.
SHRUG
I RECORD MY LECTURES AND LISTEN TO THEM LATER.
AND I FIND STUDY GROUPS.
AND YOU LEAN ON REAGAN.

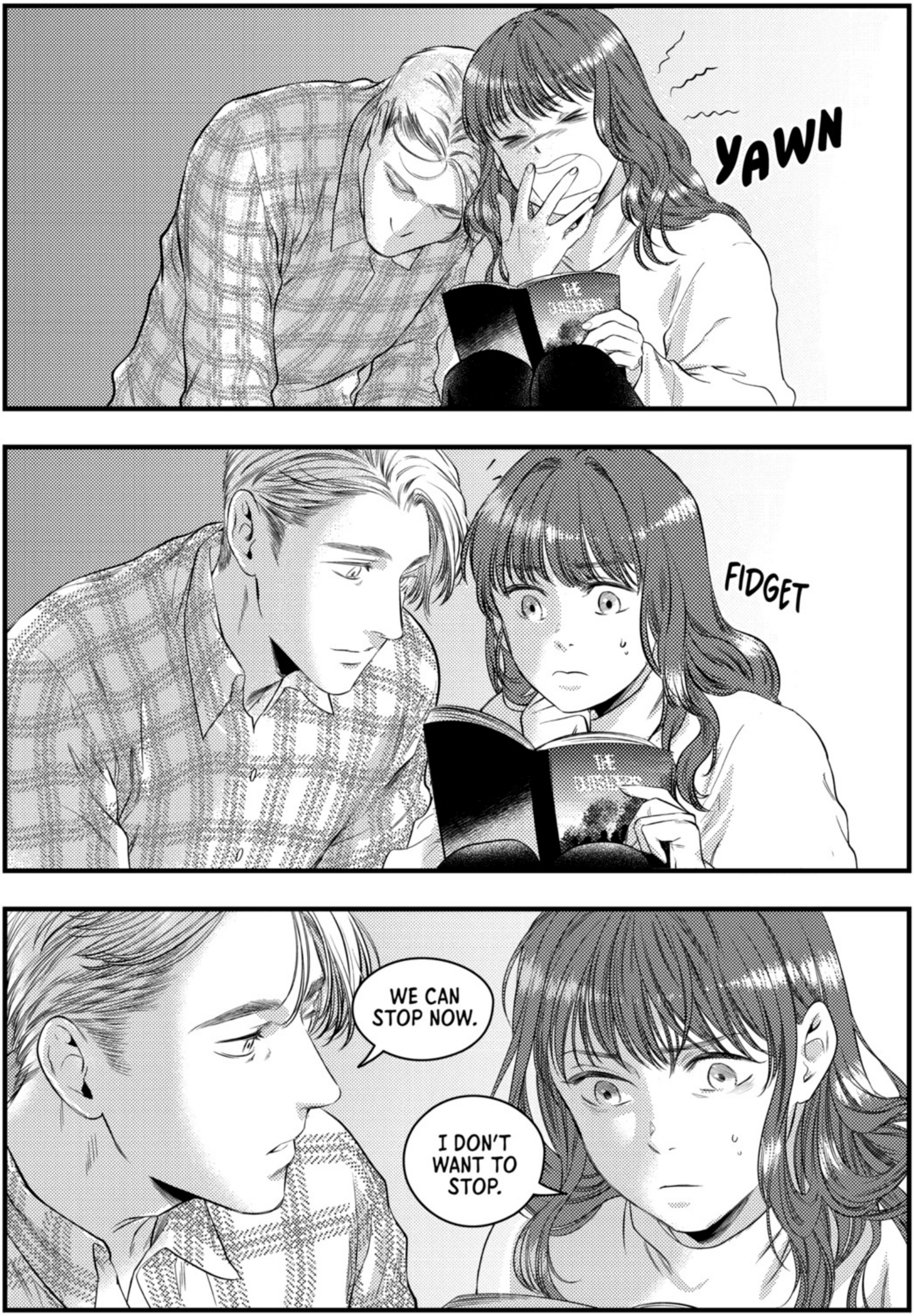

NOT JUST REAGAN.
I'M REALLY GOOD AT QUICKLY IDENTIFYING THE SMARTEST GIRL IN EVERY CLASS.
OH MY GOD, LEVI—THAT'S SO EXPLOITATIVE!

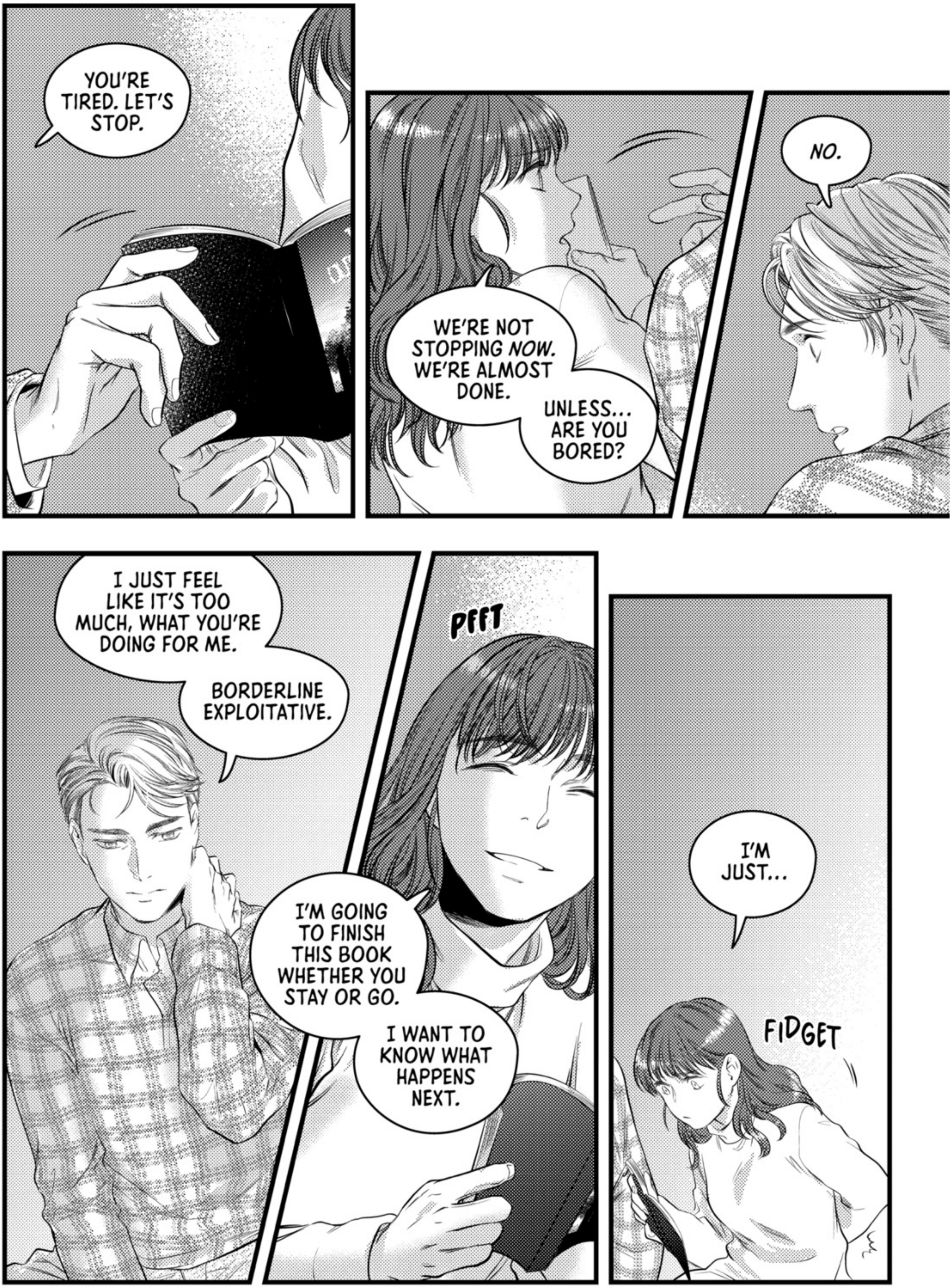

I DON'T MAKE THEM WEAR MINISKIRTS OR CALL THEM "BABY."
I JUST SAY, "HELLO, SMART GIRL, WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*"?
THEY PROBABLY THINK YOU LIKE THEM.
SIP
I *DO* LIKE THEM.
IF IT WASN'T EXPLOITATIVE, YOU'D TARGET SMART BOYS TOO.
I DO, IN A PINCH.

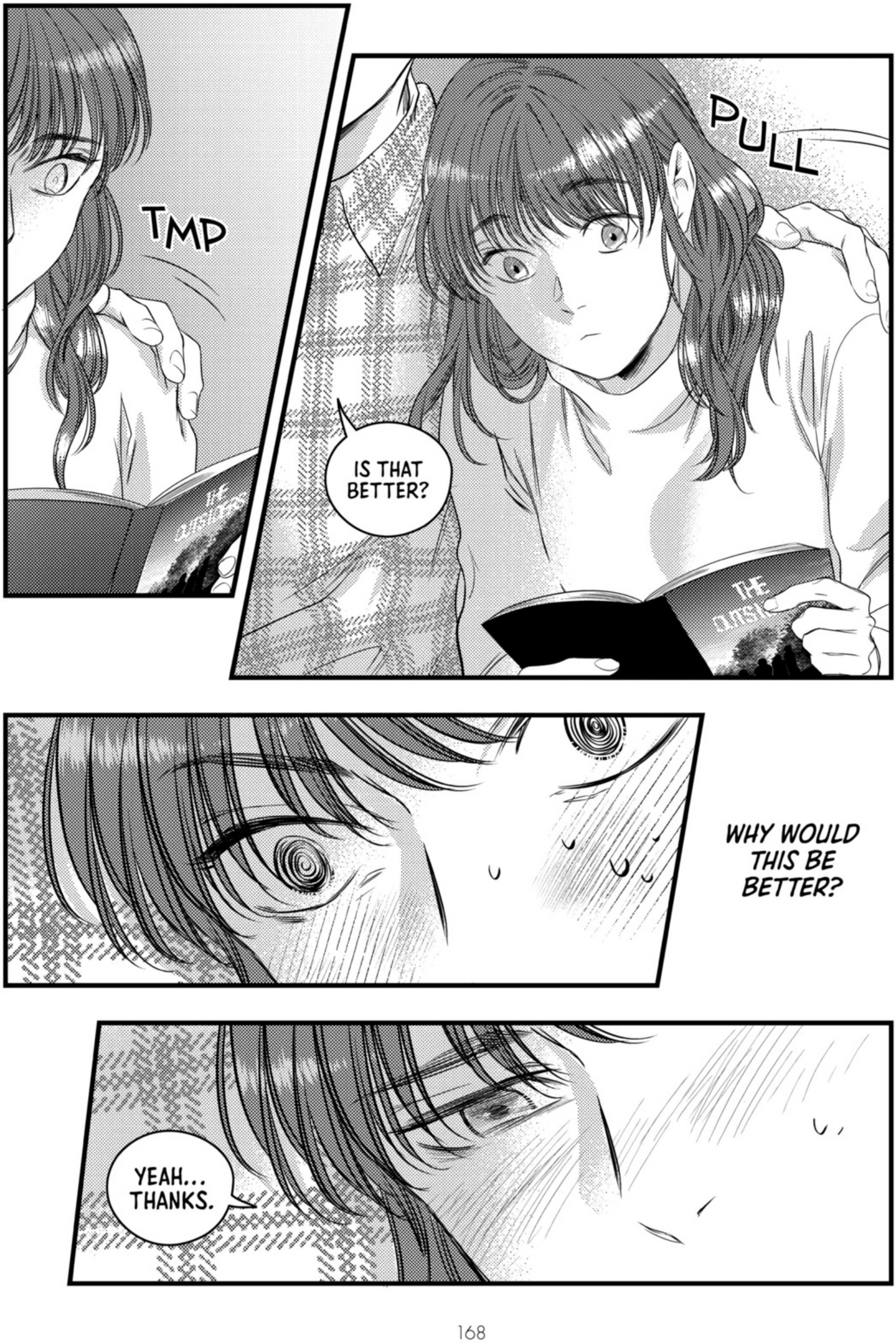

DO YOU FEEL EXPLOITED, CATHER?
NO. I *KNOW* THAT YOU DON'T LIKE ME.
PFFT. YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
SO IS THIS OLD HAT FOR YOU?
FINDING A GIRL TO READ A WHOLE BOOK TO YOU?
NO...
THIS IS A FIRST.
WELL, *NOW* I FEEL EXPLOITED.
THANK YOU.
THE

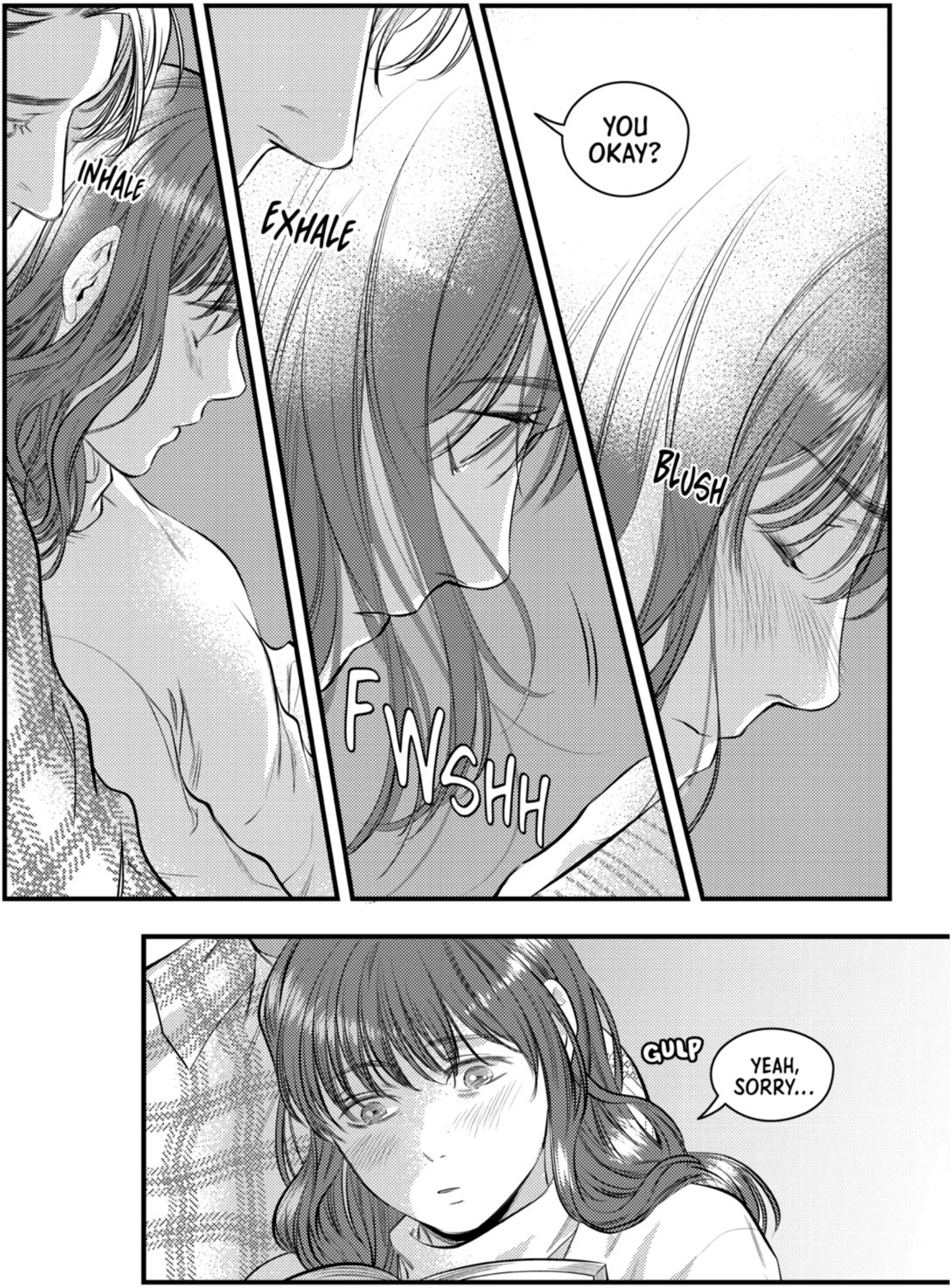

"CHAPTER 7–"
PULL
I'M SERIOUS.
THANK YOU.
NOD
"CHAPTER 7..."
Chapter 7

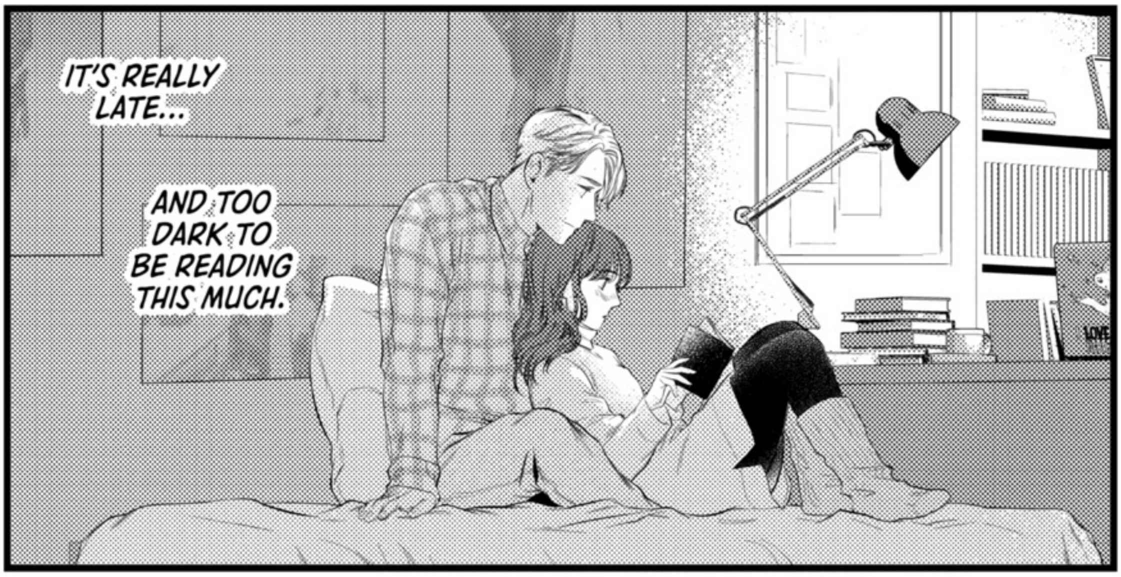


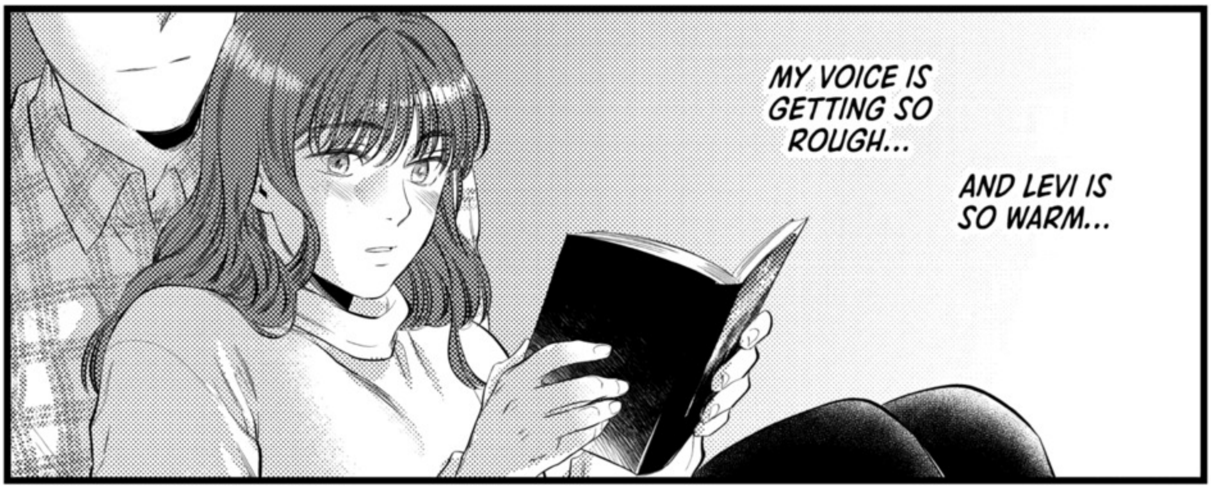

YAWN
FIDGET
WE CAN STOP NOW.
I DON'T WANT TO STOP.

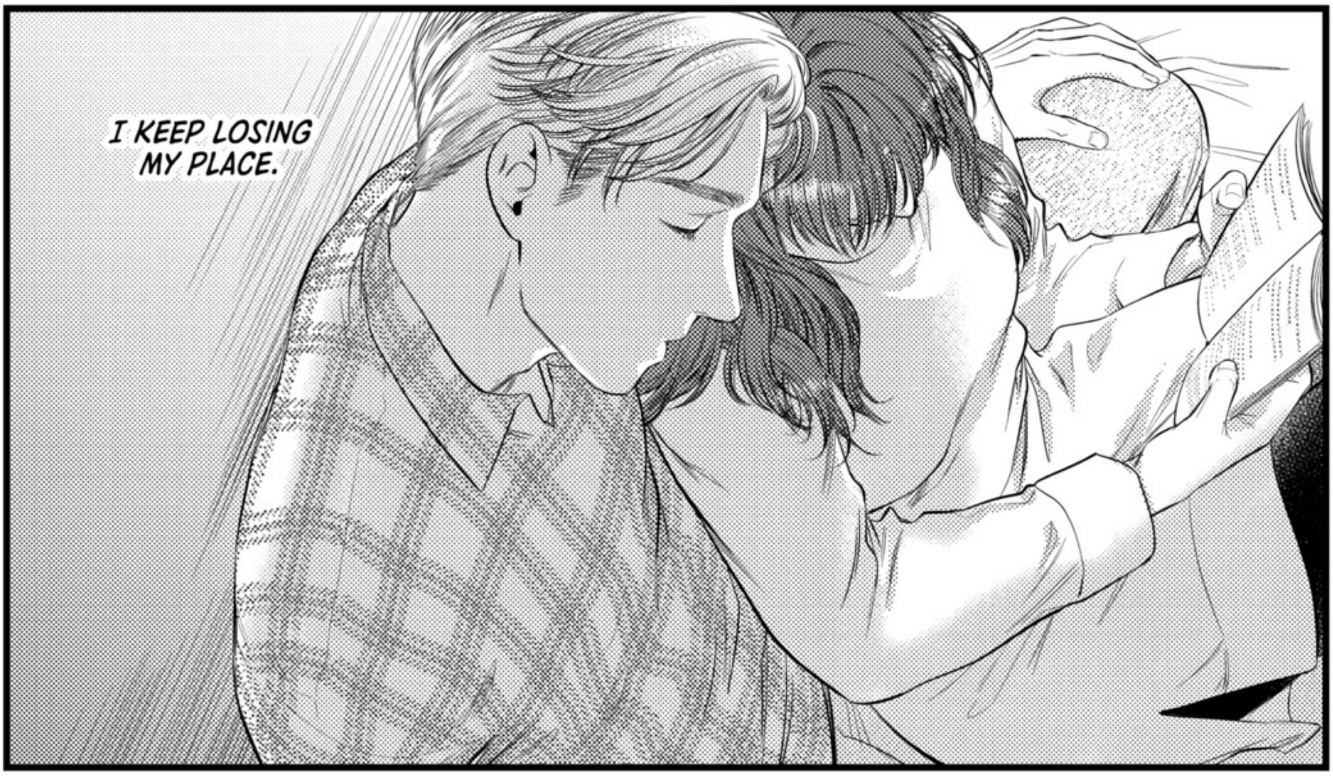

YOU'RE TIRED. LET'S STOP.
WE'RE NOT STOPPING *NOW*. WE'RE ALMOST DONE.
UNLESS... ARE YOU BORED?
NO.
I JUST FEEL LIKE IT'S TOO MUCH, WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR ME.
BORDERLINE EXPLOITATIVE.
PFFT
I'M GOING TO FINISH THIS BOOK WHETHER YOU STAY OR GO.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
I'M JUST...
FIDGET

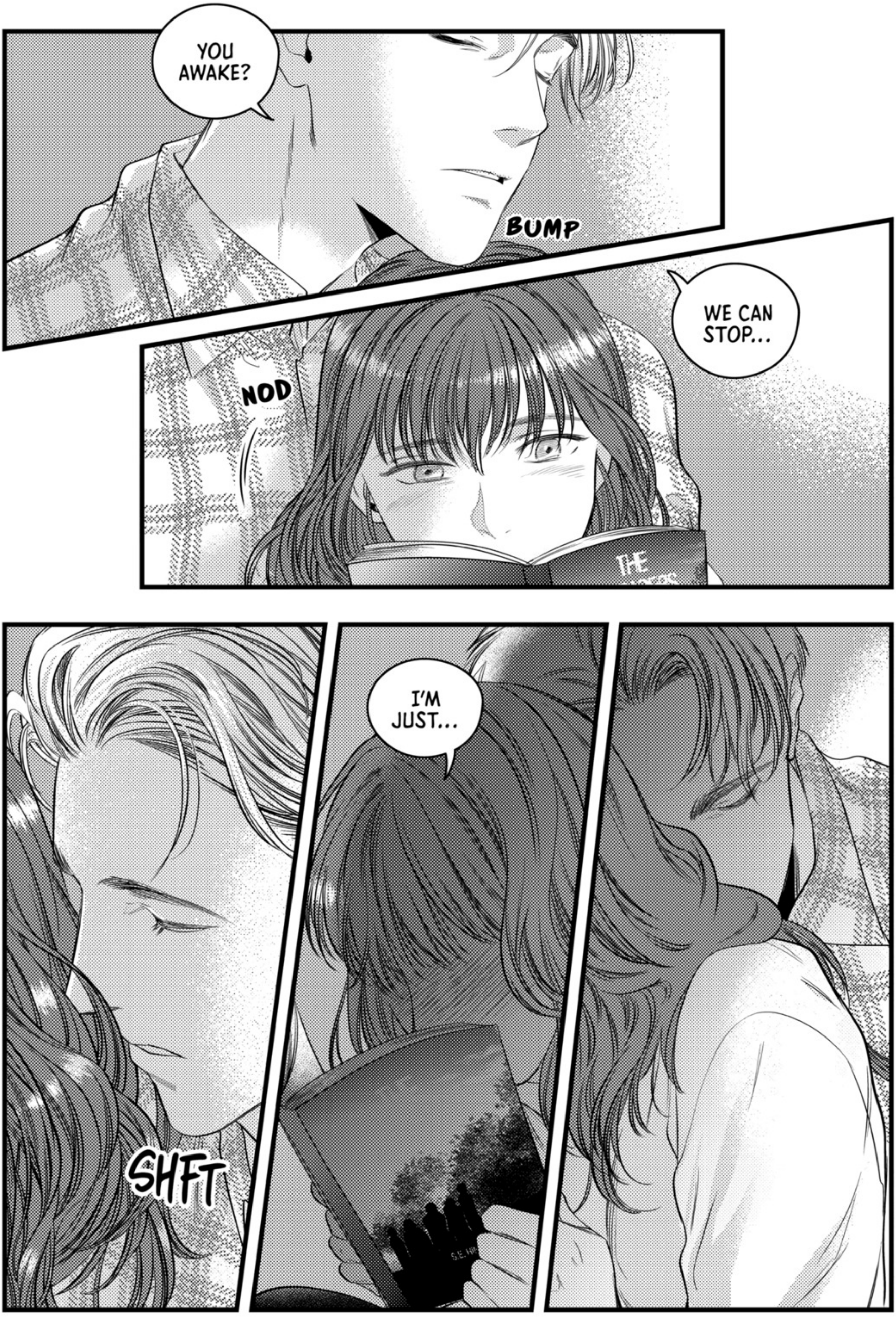

TMP
PULL
IS THAT BETTER?
WHY WOULD THIS BE BETTER?
YEAH... THANKS.

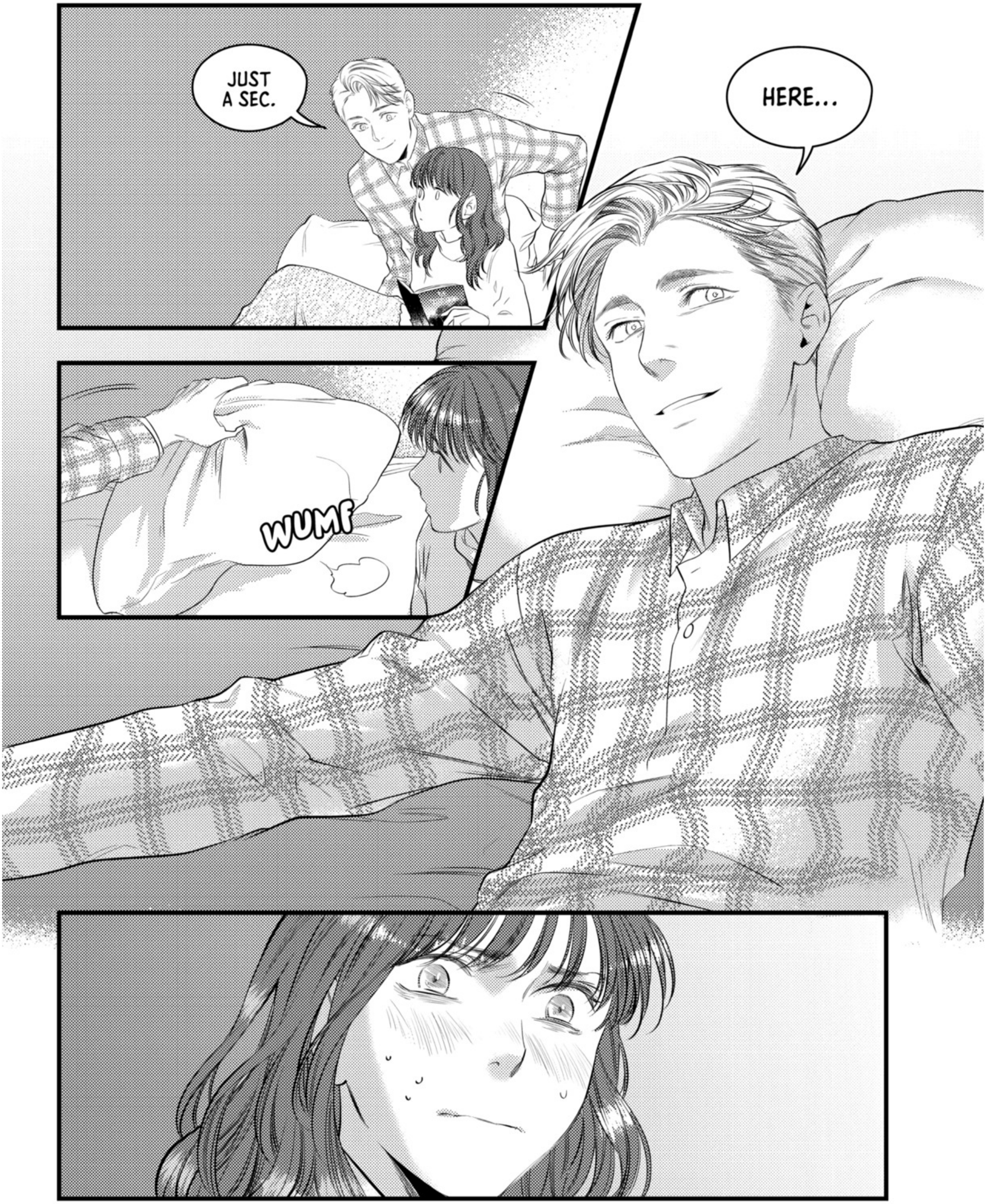

INHALE
EXHALE
FWSHH
YOU OKAY?
BLUSH
GULP
YEAH, SORRY...

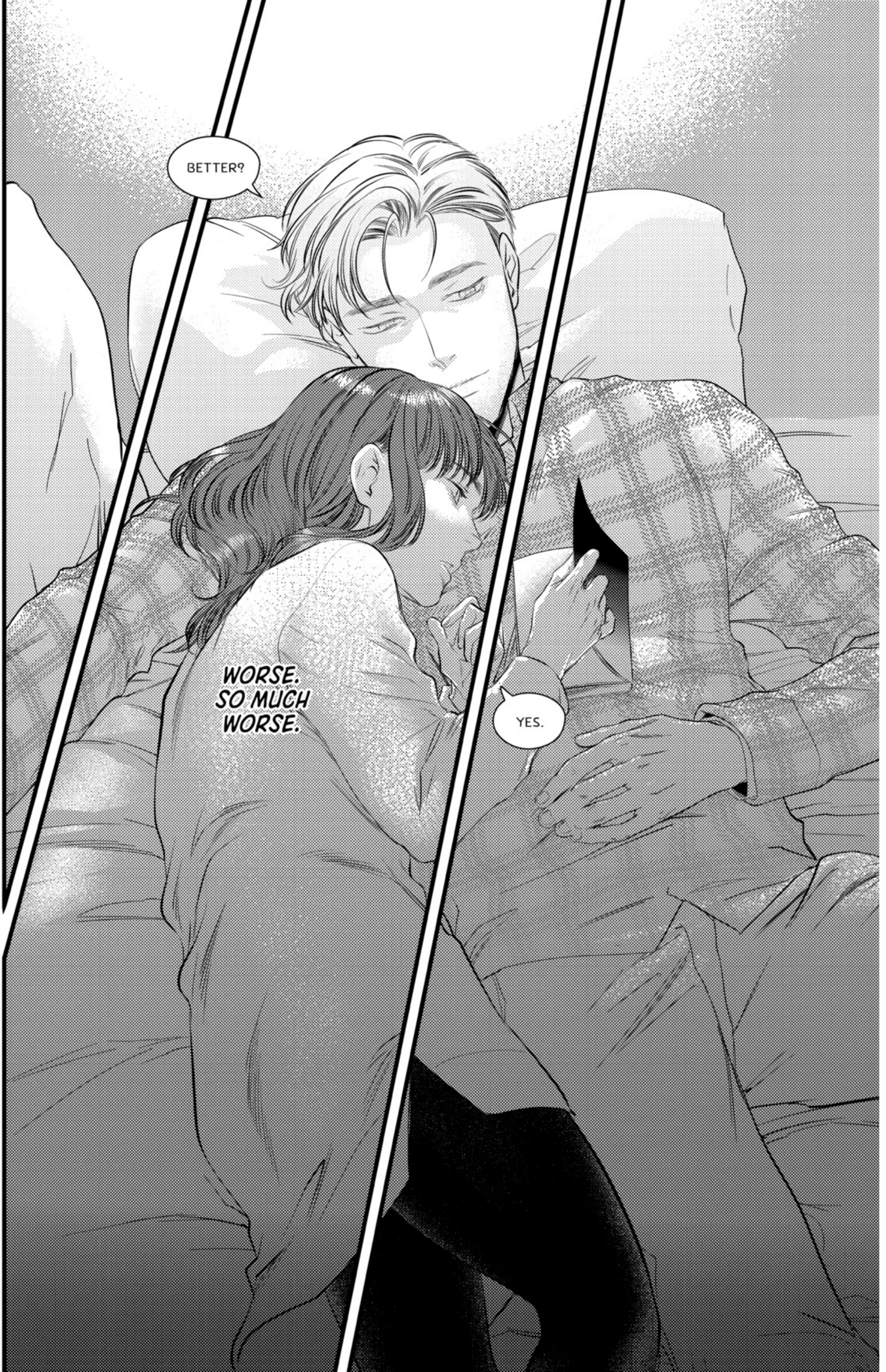

IT'S REALLY LATE...
AND TOO DARK TO BE READING THIS MUCH.

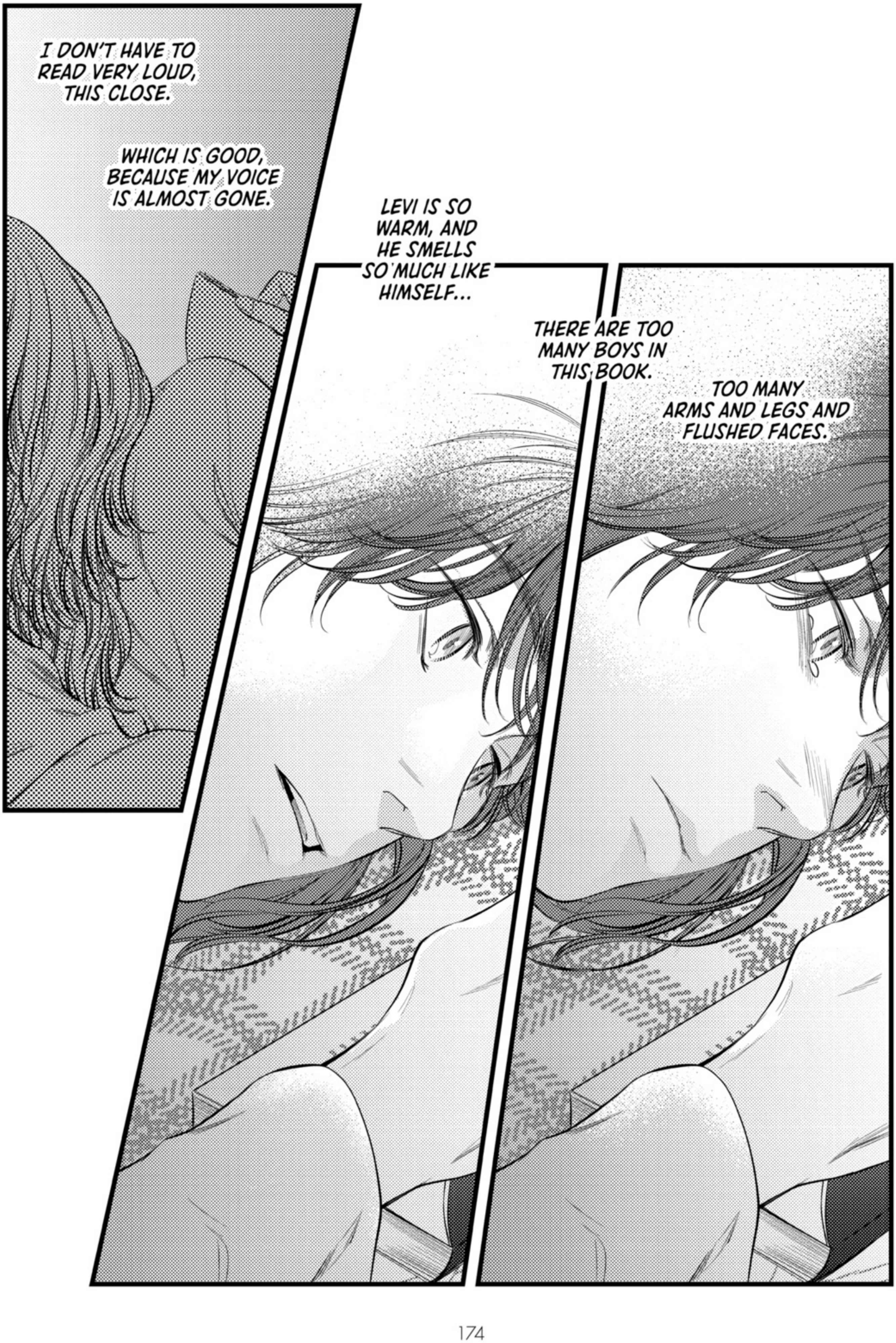

MY VOICE IS GETTING SO ROUGH...
AND LEVI IS SO WARM...

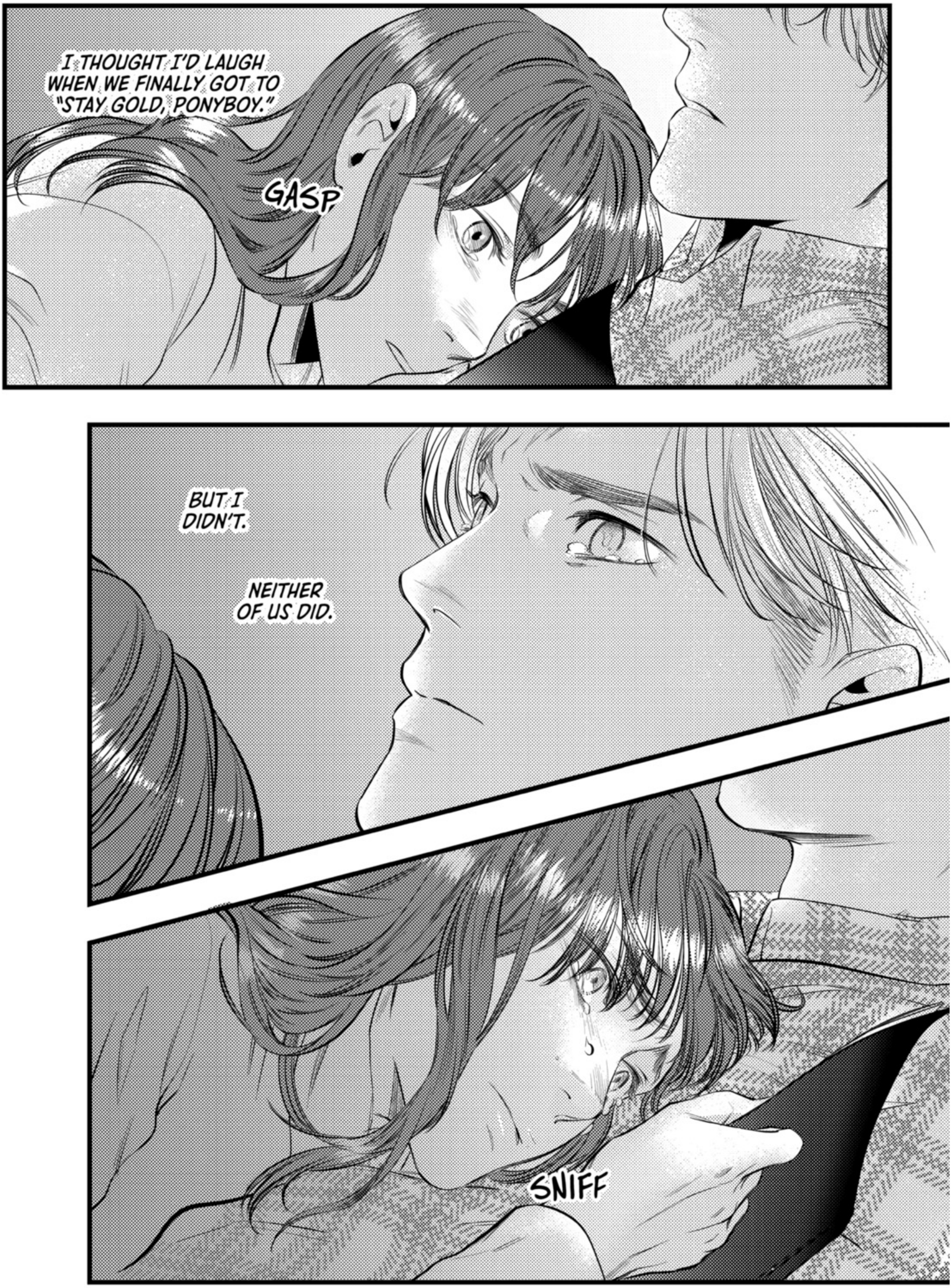

I KEEP LOSING MY PLACE.

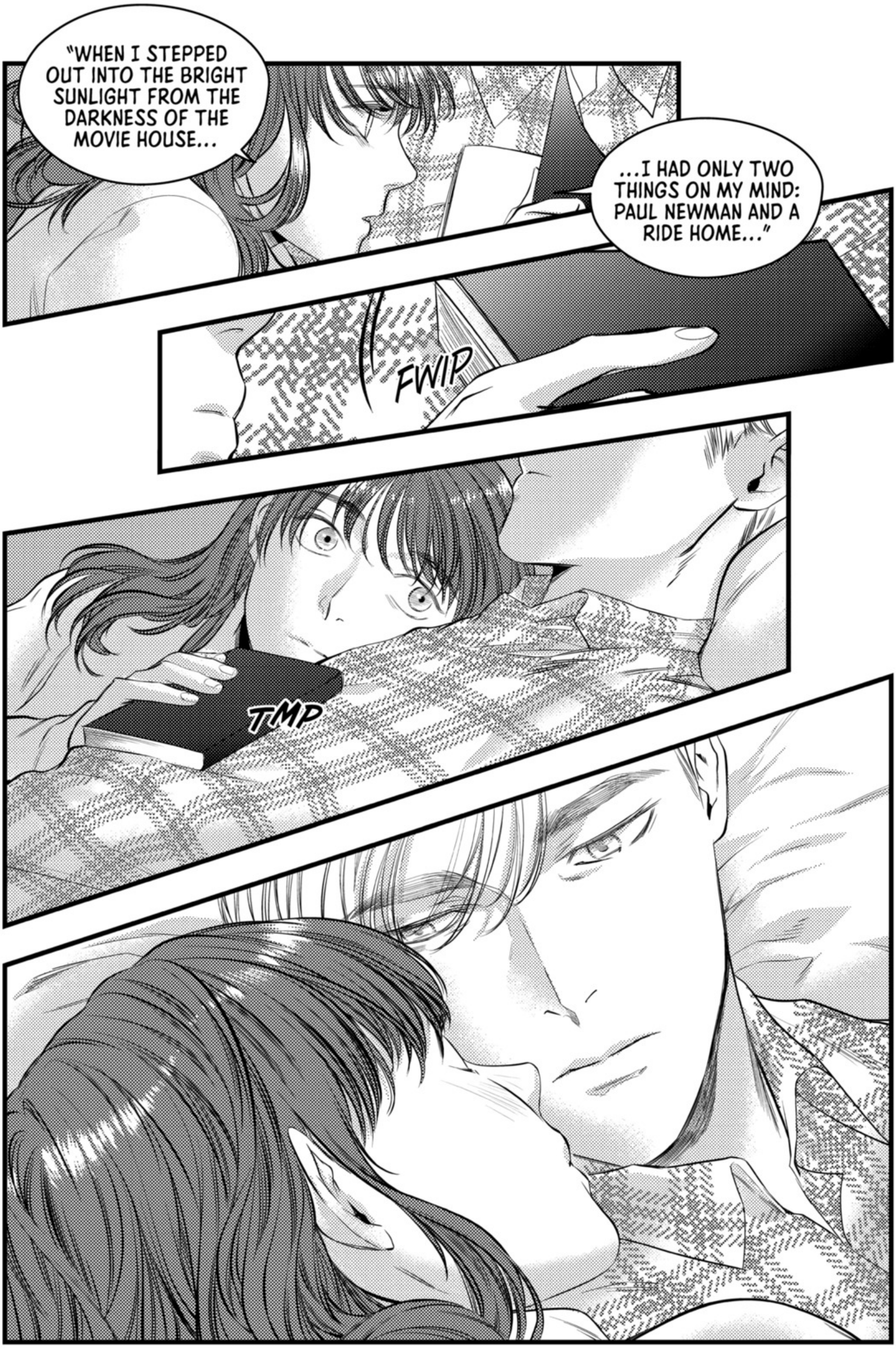

YOU AWAKE?
BUMP
WE CAN STOP...
NOD
SHFT
I'M JUST...

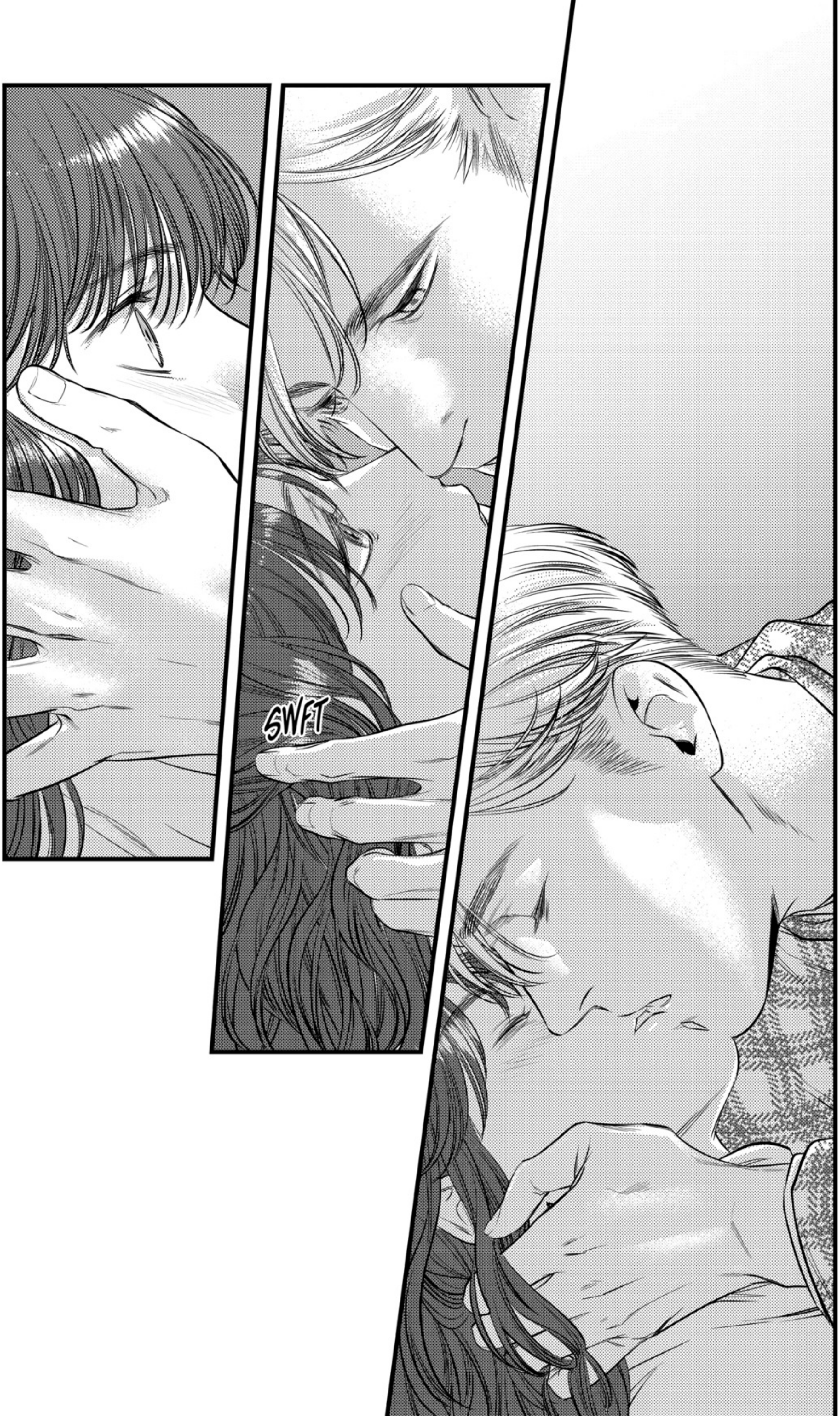

JUST A SEC.
WUMF
HERE...

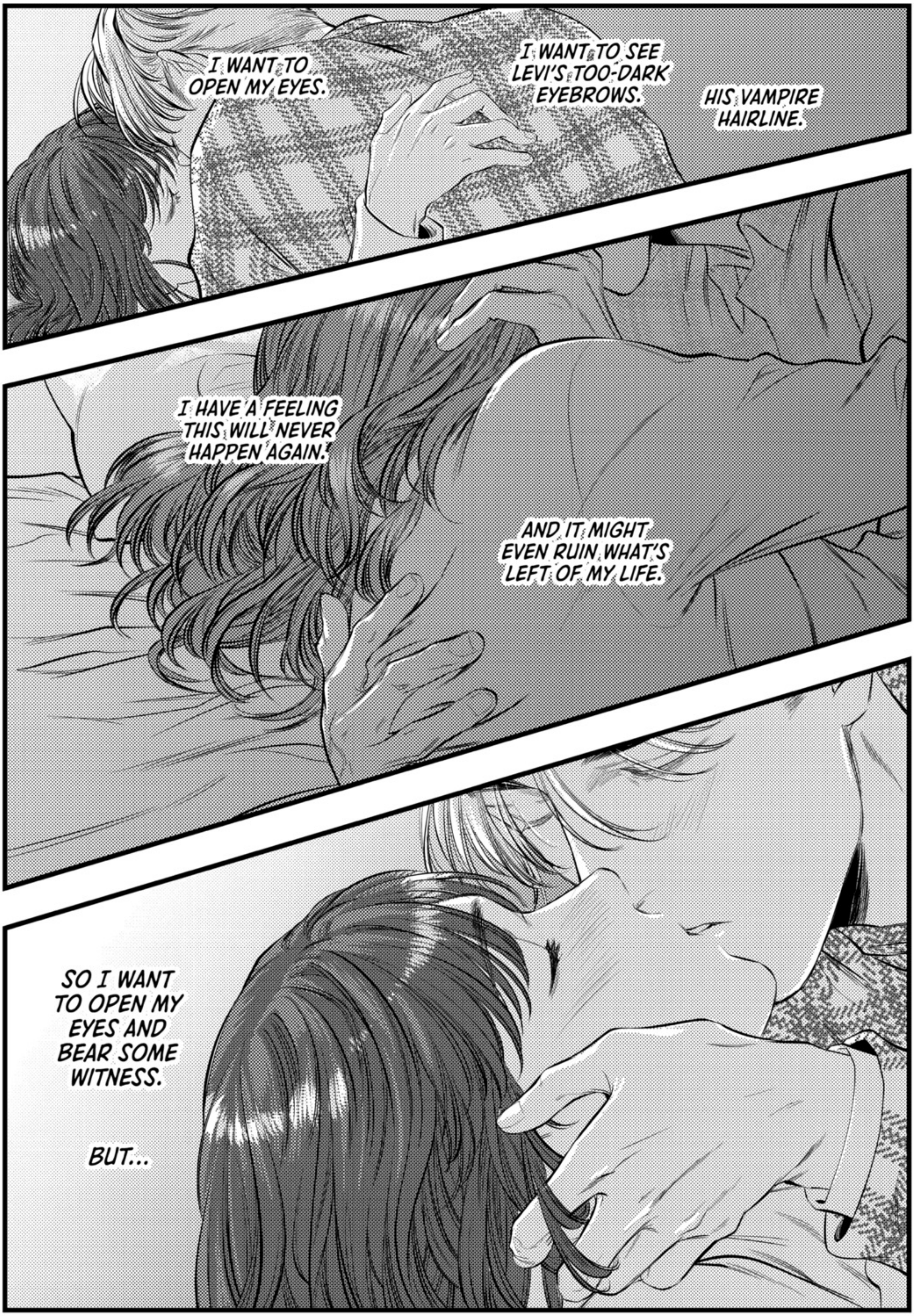

BETTER?
YES.
WORSE. SO MUCH WORSE.

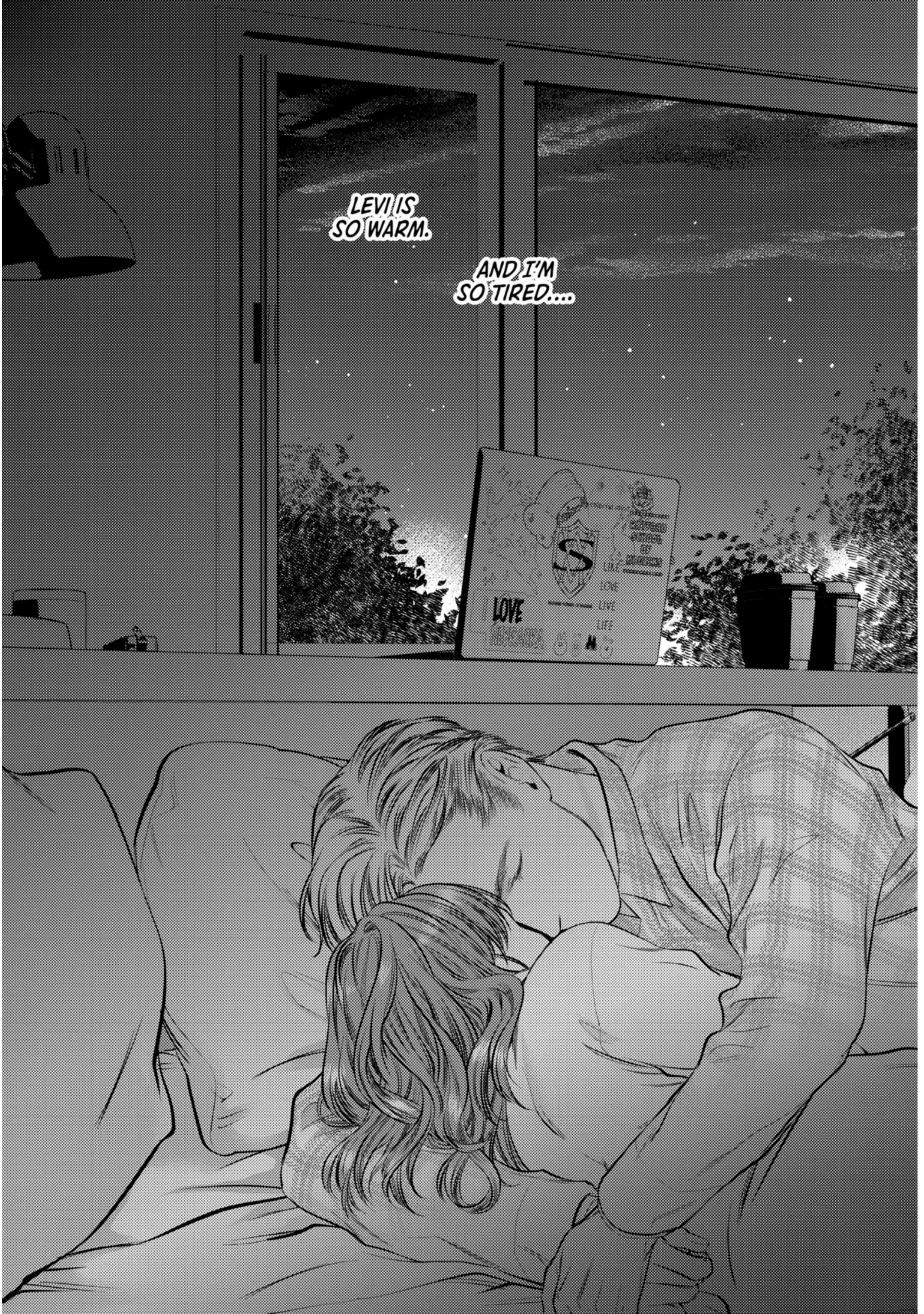

I DON'T HAVE TO READ VERY LOUD, THIS CLOSE.
WHICH IS GOOD, BECAUSE MY VOICE IS ALMOST GONE.
LEVI IS SO WARM, AND HE SMELLS SO MUCH LIKE HIMSELF...
THERE ARE TOO MANY BOYS IN THIS BOOK.
TOO MANY ARMS AND LEGS AND FLUSHED FACES.

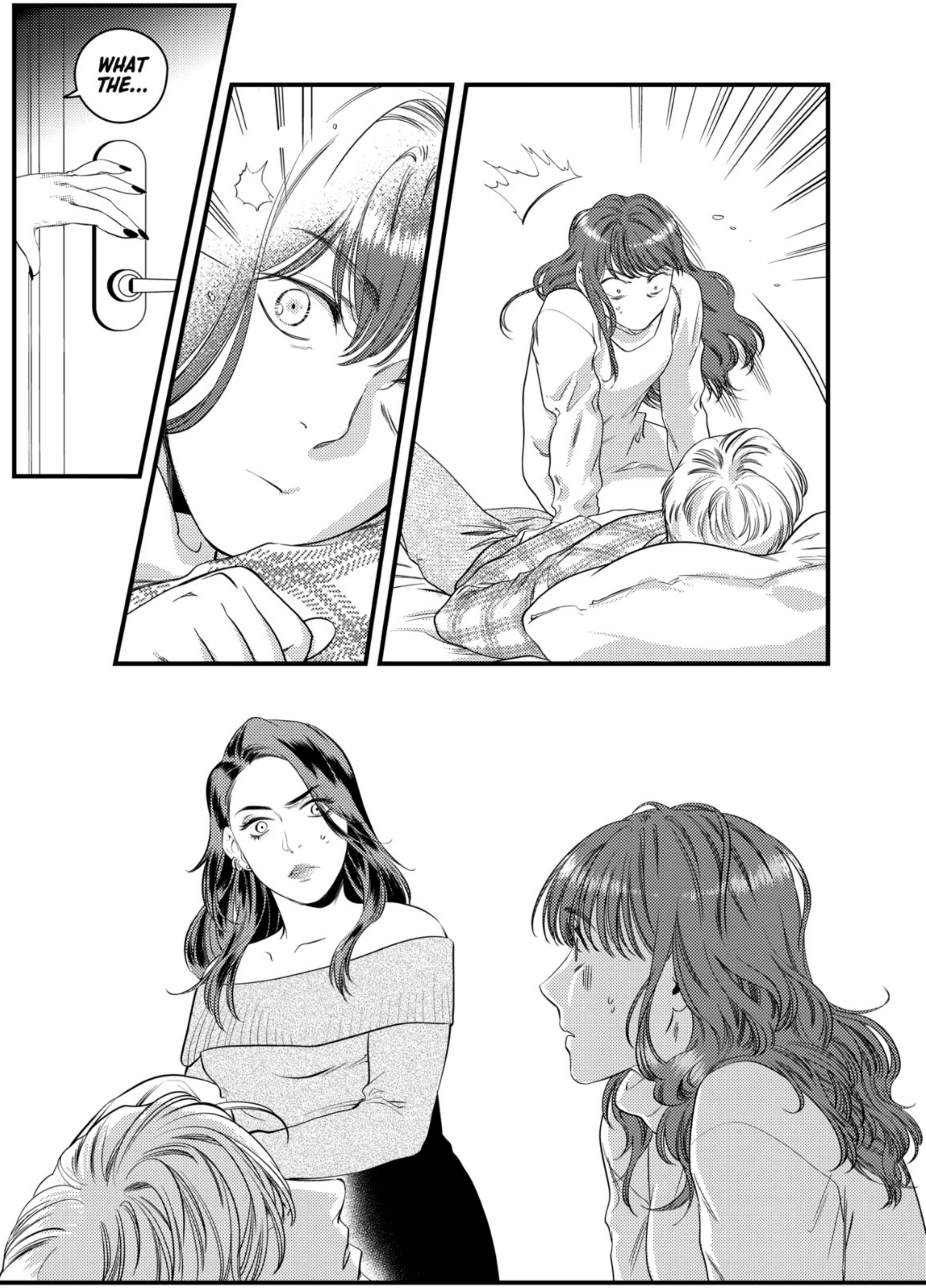

I THOUGHT I'D LAUGH WHEN WE FINALLY GOT TO "STAY GOLD, PONYBOY."
GASP
BUT I DIDN'T.
NEITHER OF US DID.
SNIFF

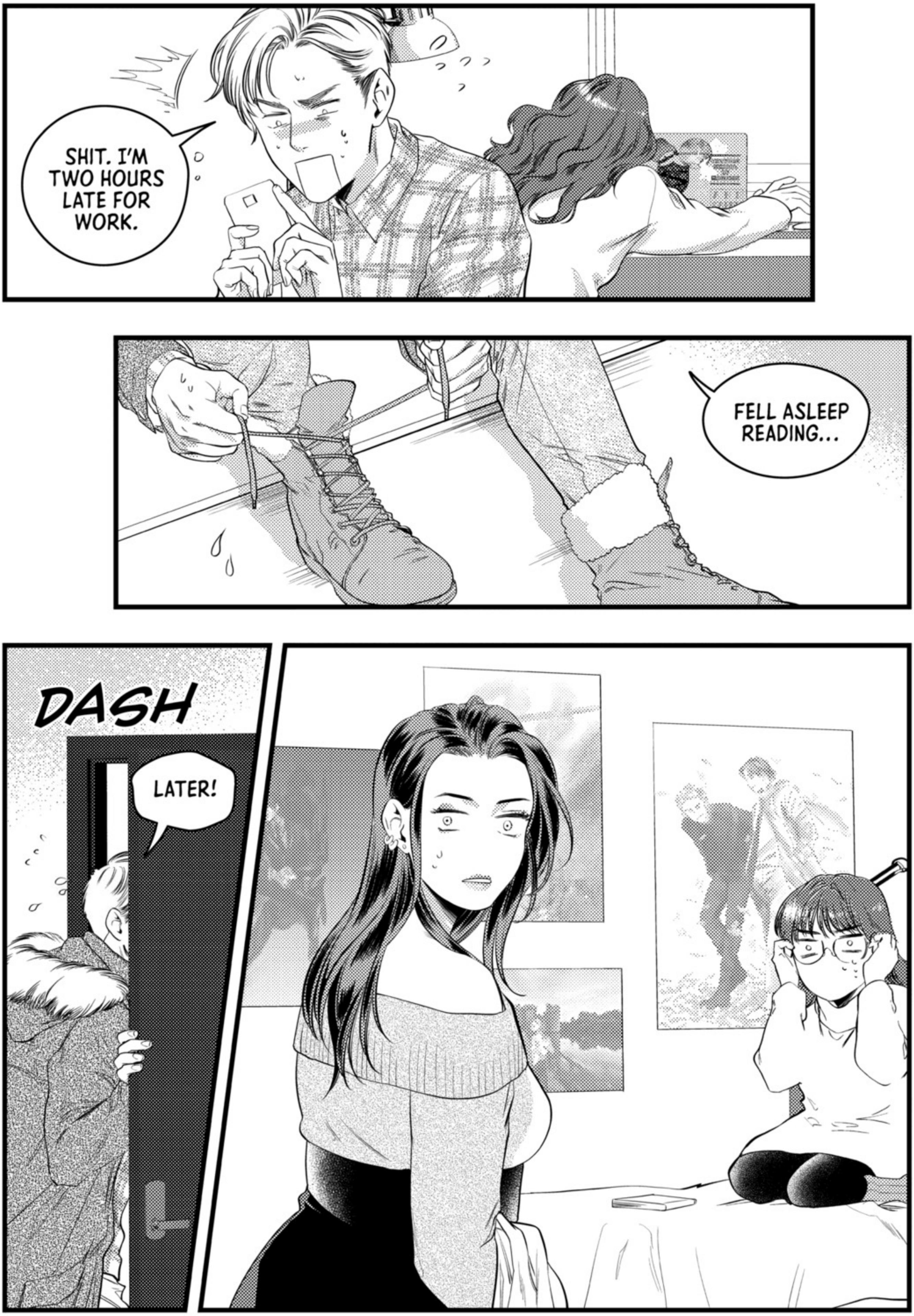

"WHEN I STEPPED OUT INTO THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE MOVIE HOUSE...
...I HAD ONLY TWO THINGS ON MY MIND: PAUL NEWMAN AND A RIDE HOME..."
FWIP
TMP

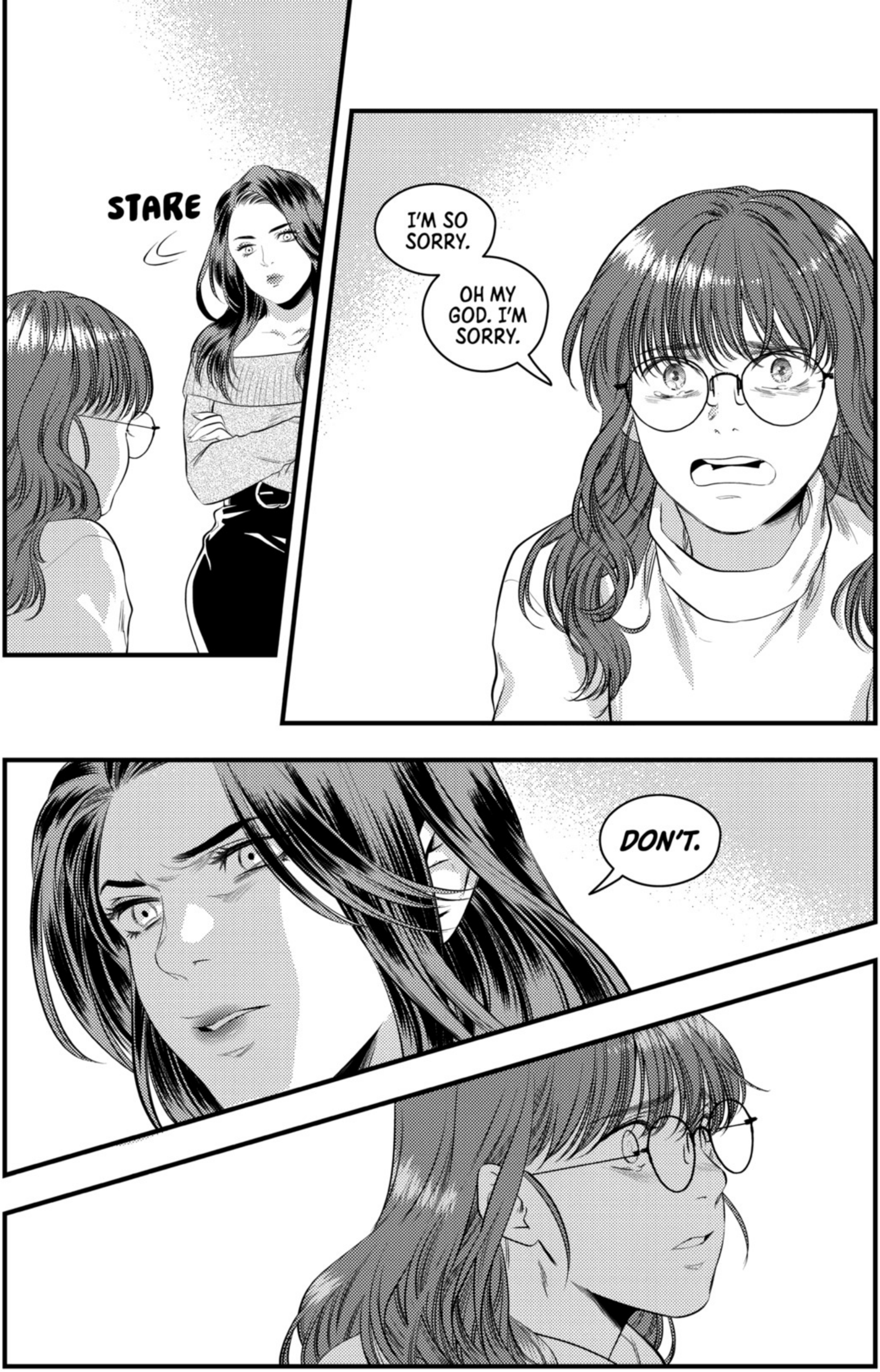

SWFT

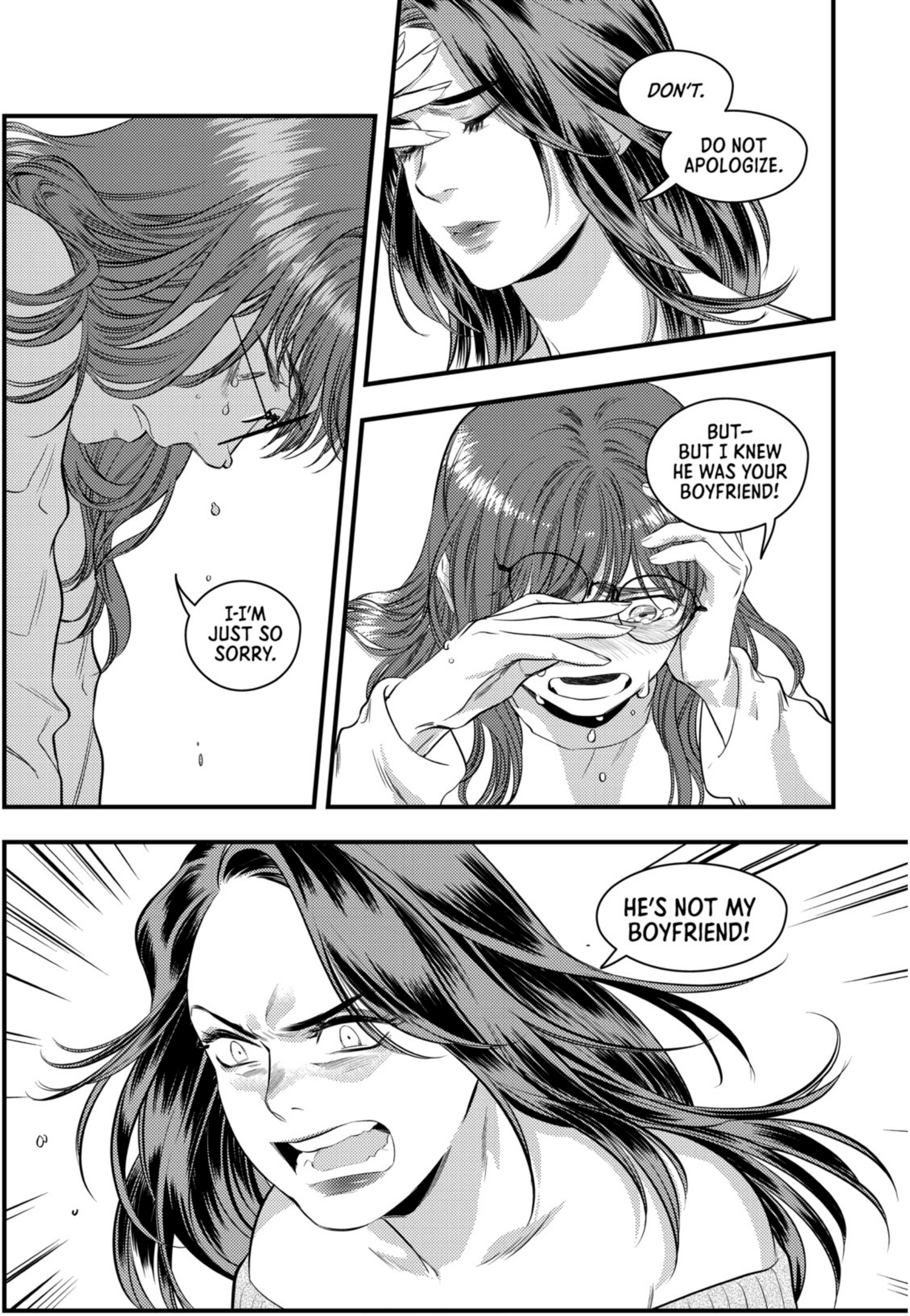

I WANT TO OPEN MY EYES.
I WANT TO SEE LEVI'S TOO-DARK EYEBROWS.
HIS VAMPIRE HAIRLINE.
I HAVE A FEELING THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.
AND IT MIGHT EVEN RUIN WHAT'S LEFT OF MY LIFE.
SO I WANT TO OPEN MY EYES AND BEAR SOME WITNESS.
BUT...

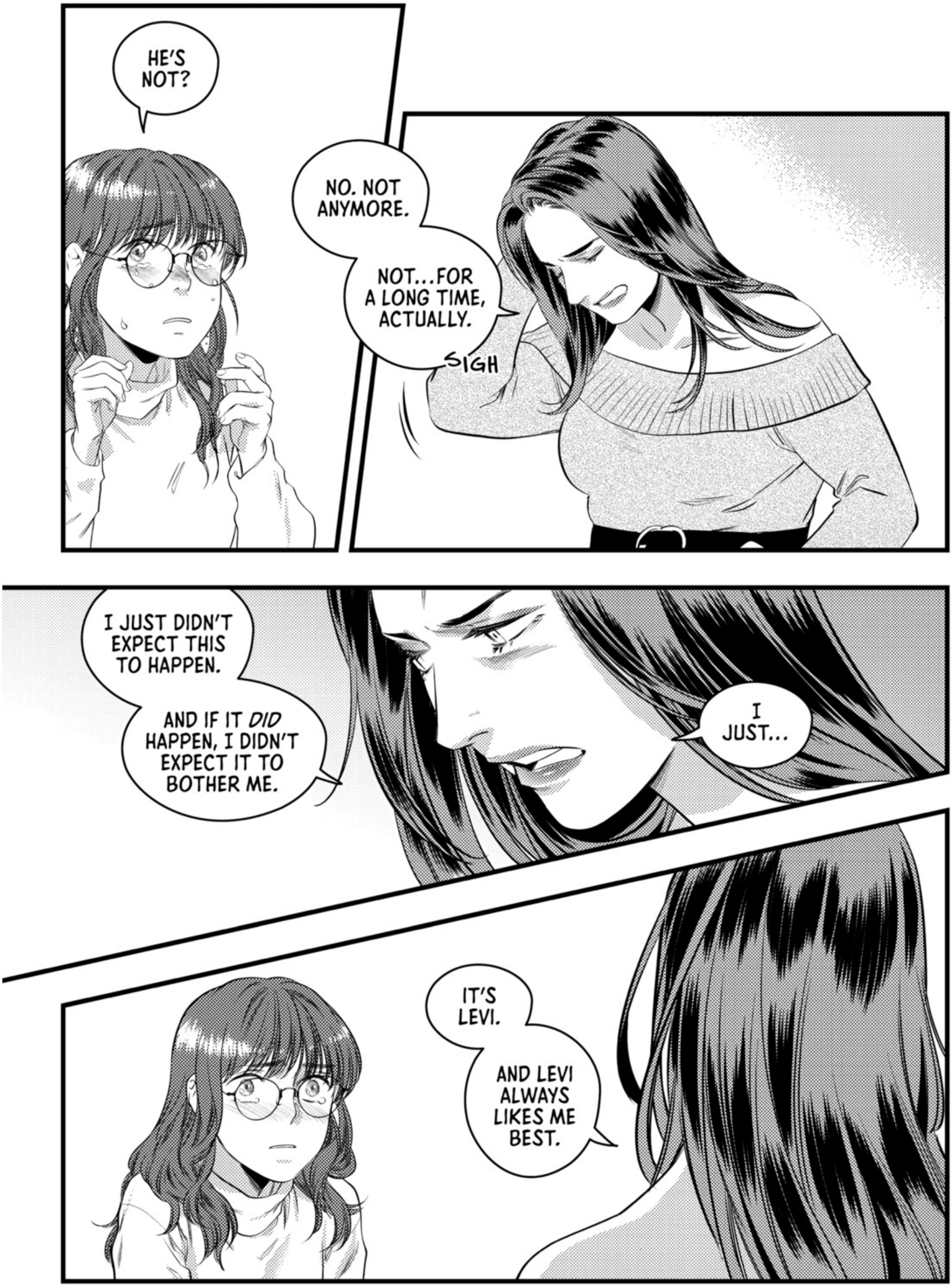

LEVI IS SO WARM.
AND I'M SO TIRED....
S
LIKE
LOVE
LIVE
LIFE
LOVE

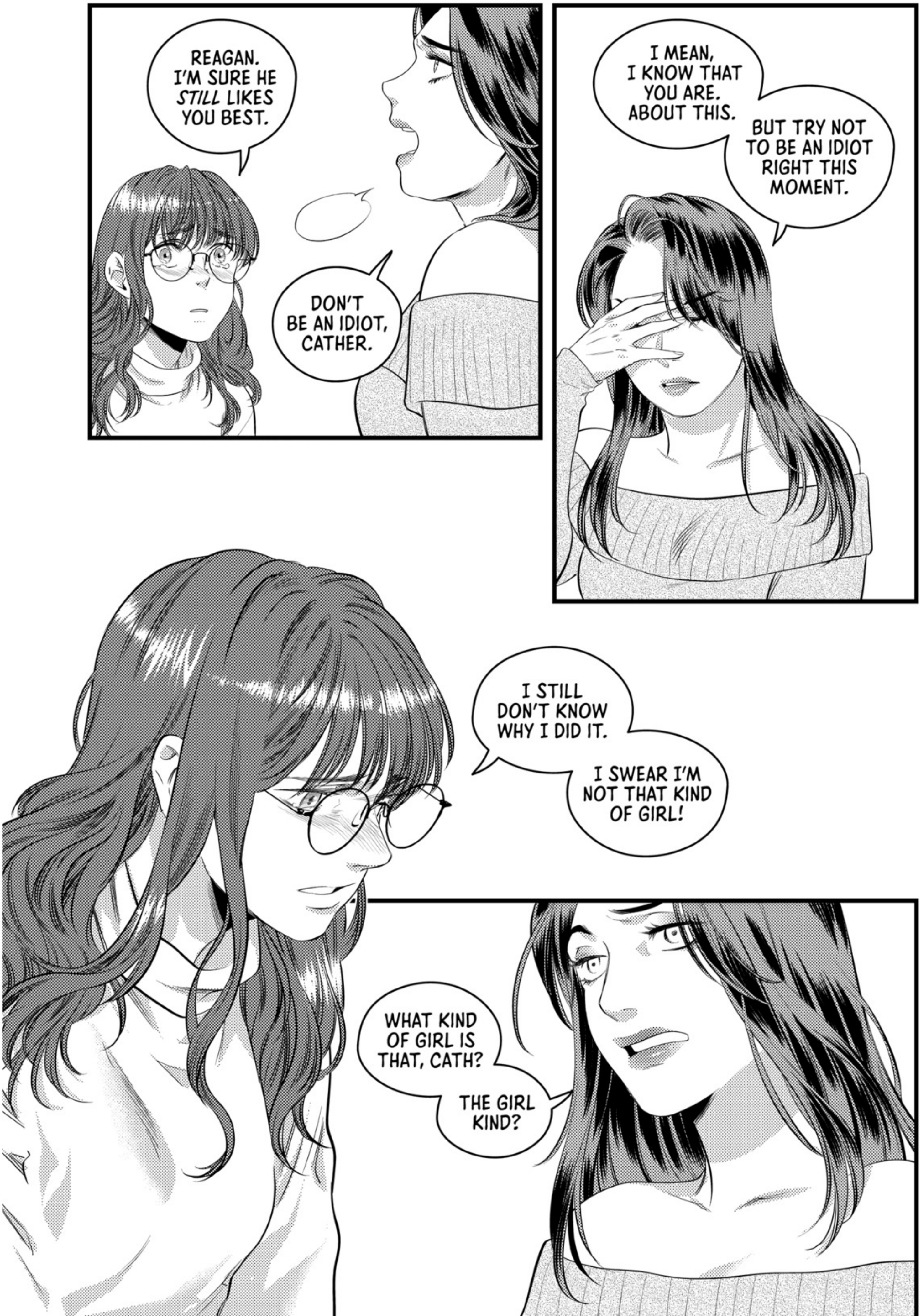

WHAT THE...

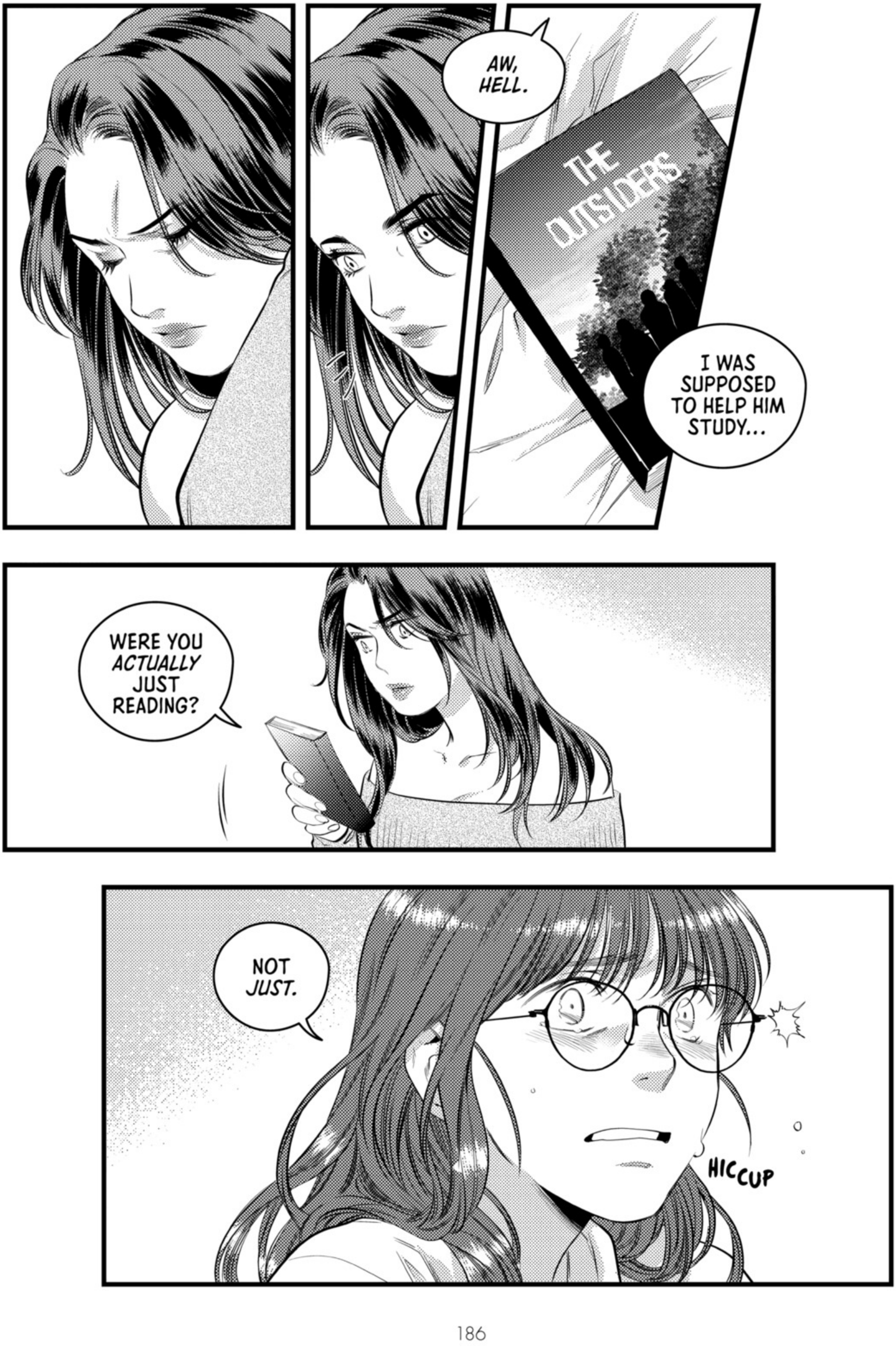

SHIT. I'M TWO HOURS LATE FOR WORK.
FELL ASLEEP READING...
DASH
LATER!

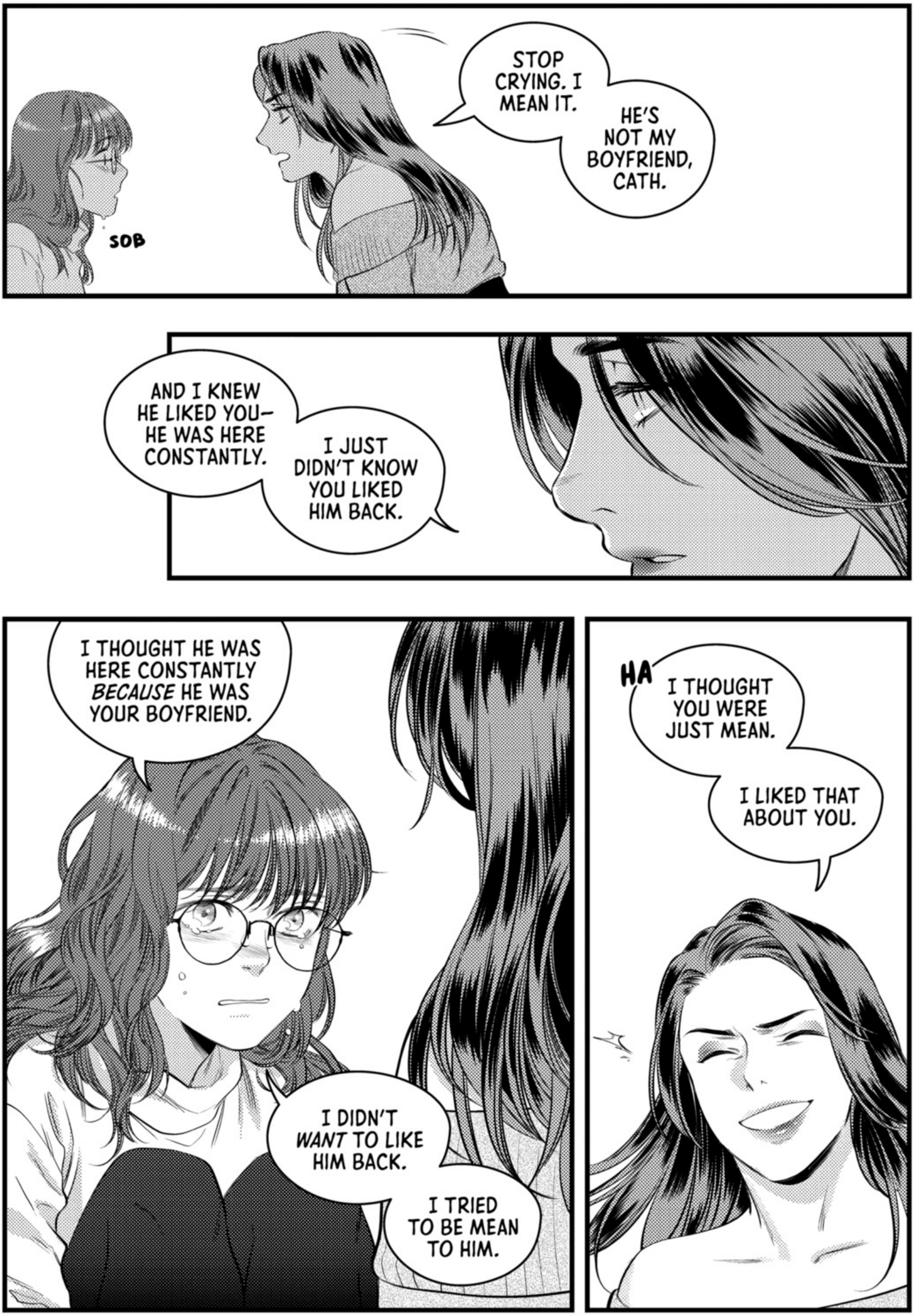

STARE
I'M SO SORRY.
OH MY GOD. I'M SORRY.
DON'T.

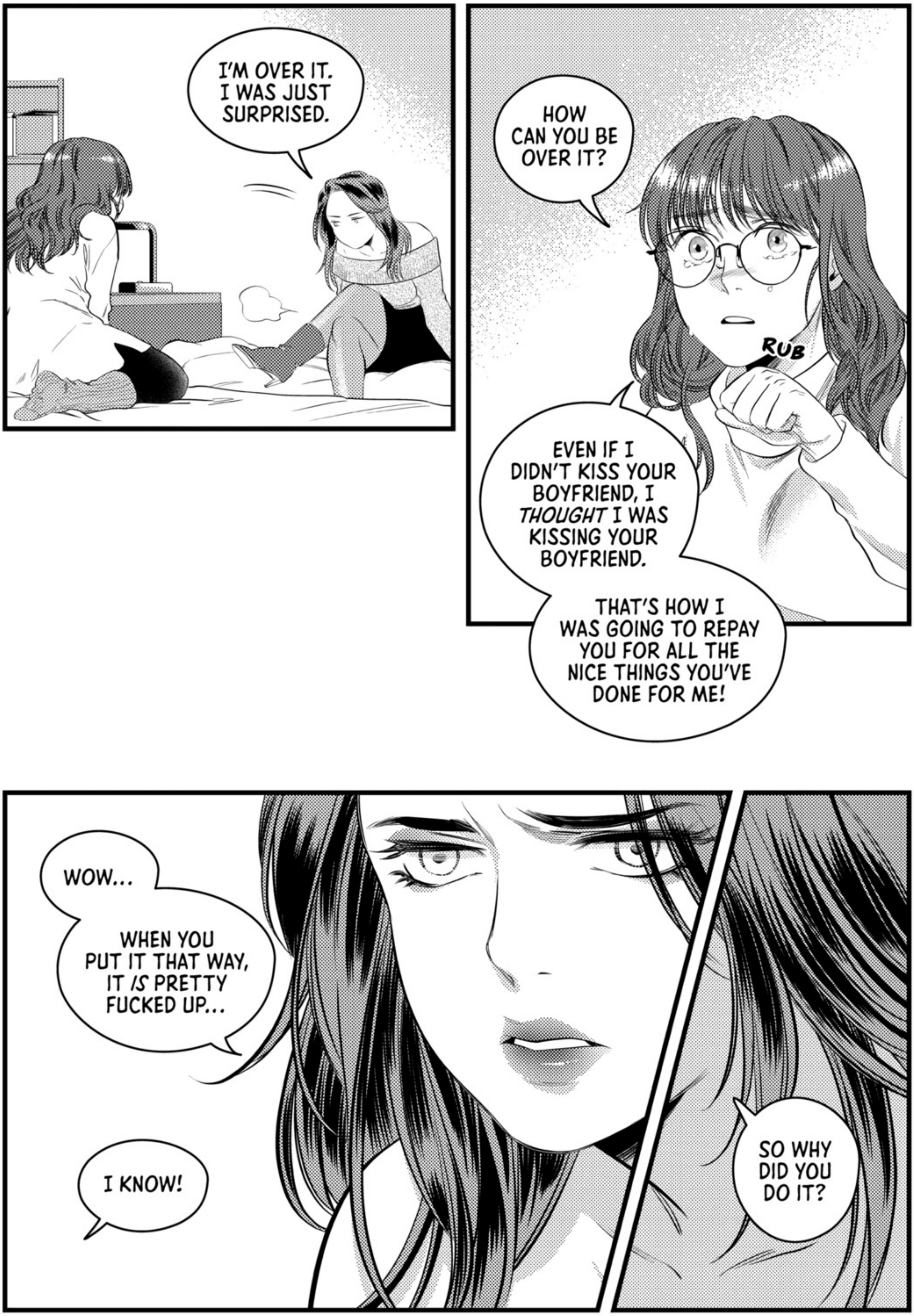

I-I'M JUST SO SORRY.
DON'T.
DO NOT APOLOGIZE.
BUT— BUT I KNEW HE WAS YOUR BOYFRIEND!
HE'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND!

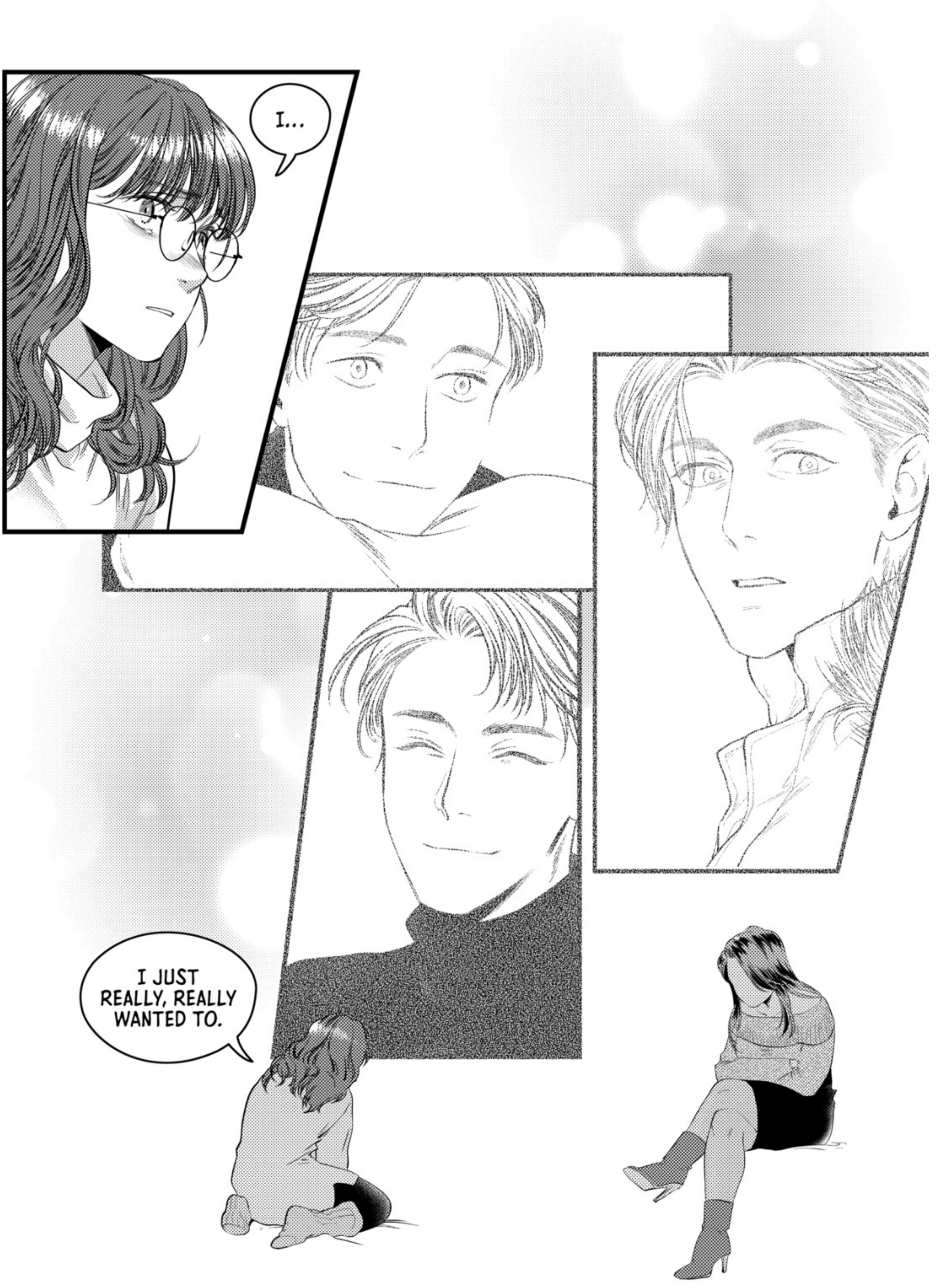

HE'S NOT?
NO. NOT ANYMORE.
NOT...FOR A LONG TIME, ACTUALLY.
SIGH
I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT THIS TO HAPPEN.
AND IF IT *DID* HAPPEN, I DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO BOTHER ME.
I JUST...
IT'S LEVI.
AND LEVI ALWAYS LIKES ME BEST.

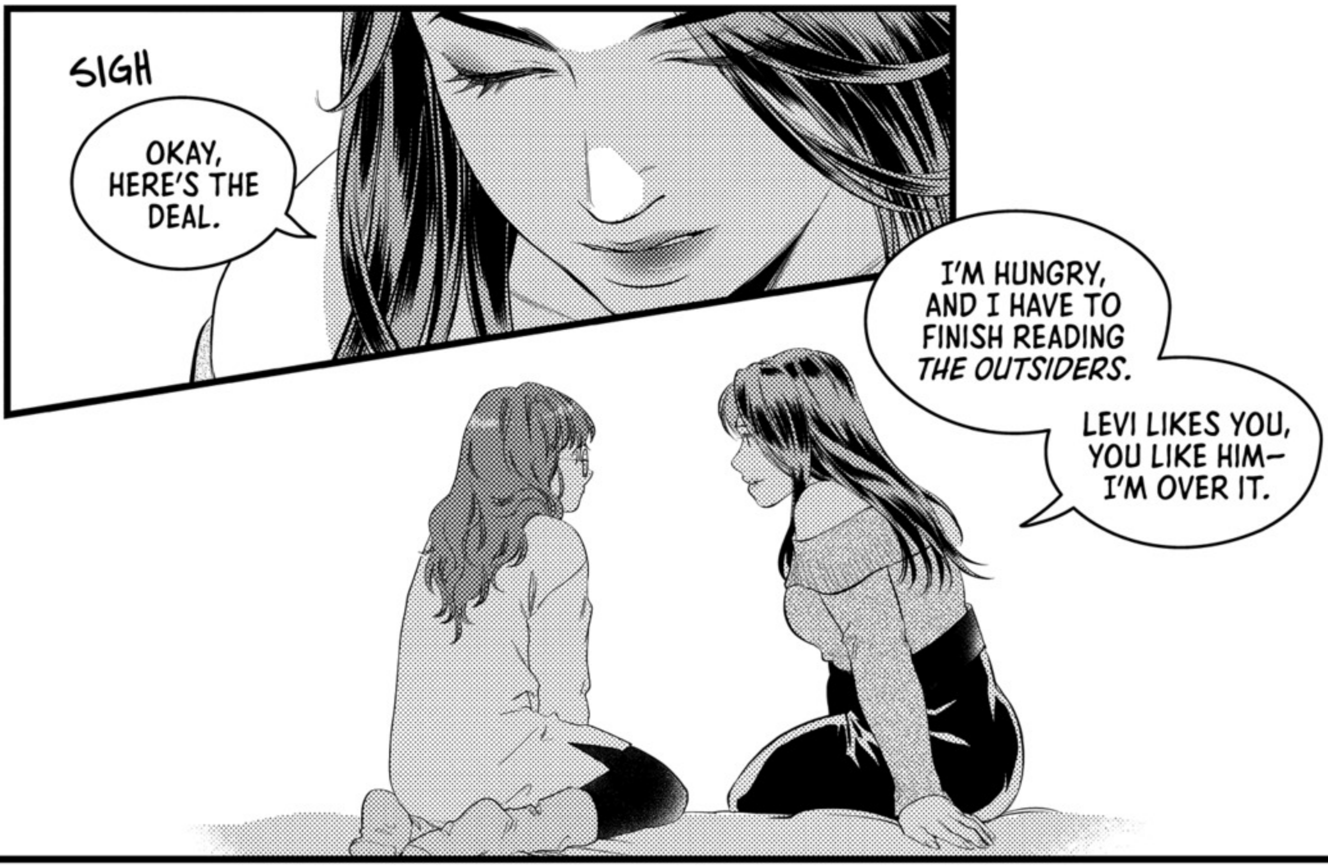

REAGAN. I'M SURE HE *STILL* LIKES YOU BEST.
DON'T BE AN IDIOT, CATHER.
I MEAN, I KNOW THAT YOU ARE. ABOUT THIS.
BUT TRY NOT TO BE AN IDIOT RIGHT THIS MOMENT.
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT.
I SWEAR I'M NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL!
WHAT KIND OF GIRL IS THAT, CATH?
THE GIRL KIND?

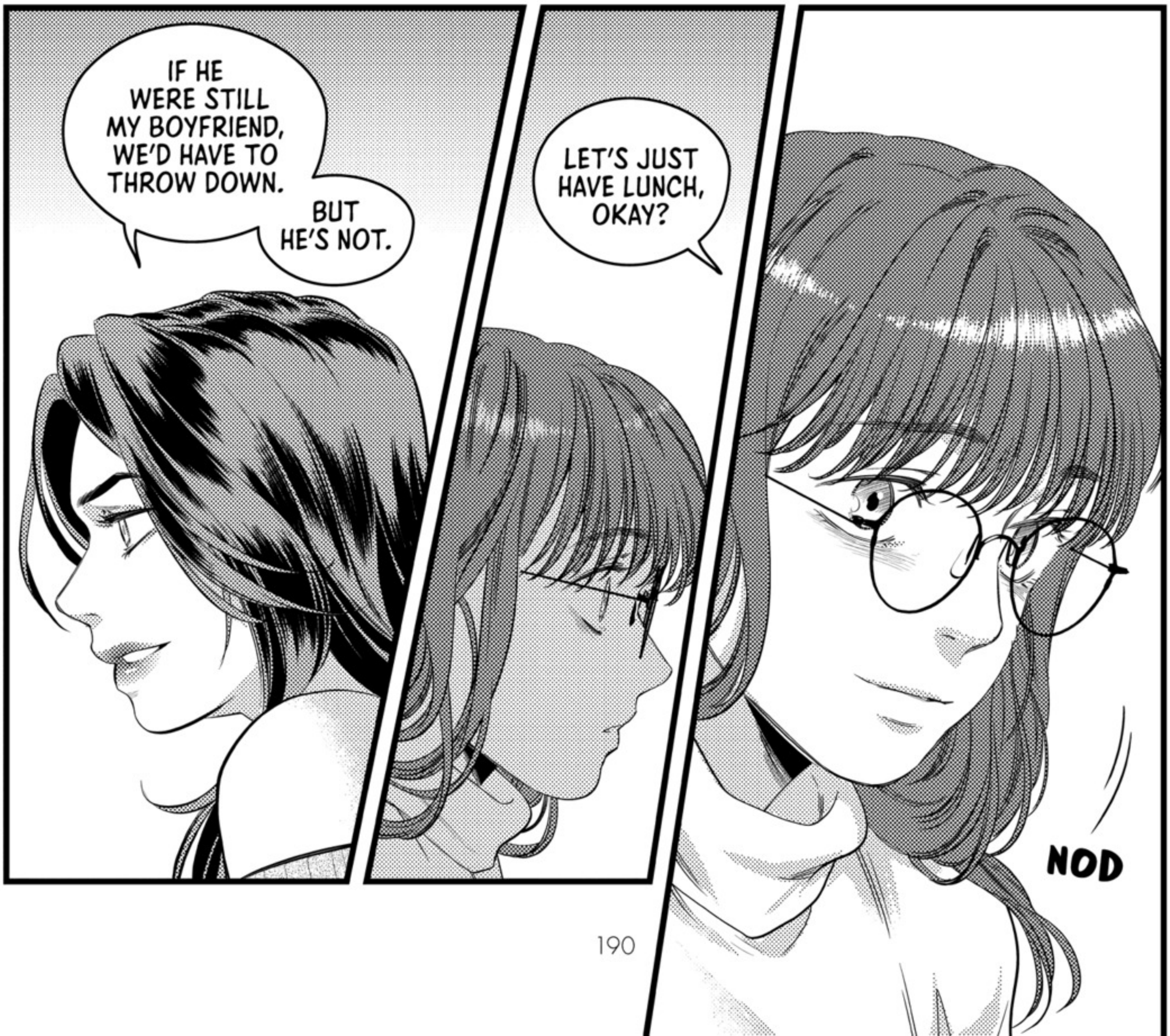

AW, HELL.
THE OUTSIDERS
I WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP HIM STUDY...
WERE YOU *ACTUALLY* JUST READING?
NOT *JUST*.
HICCUP

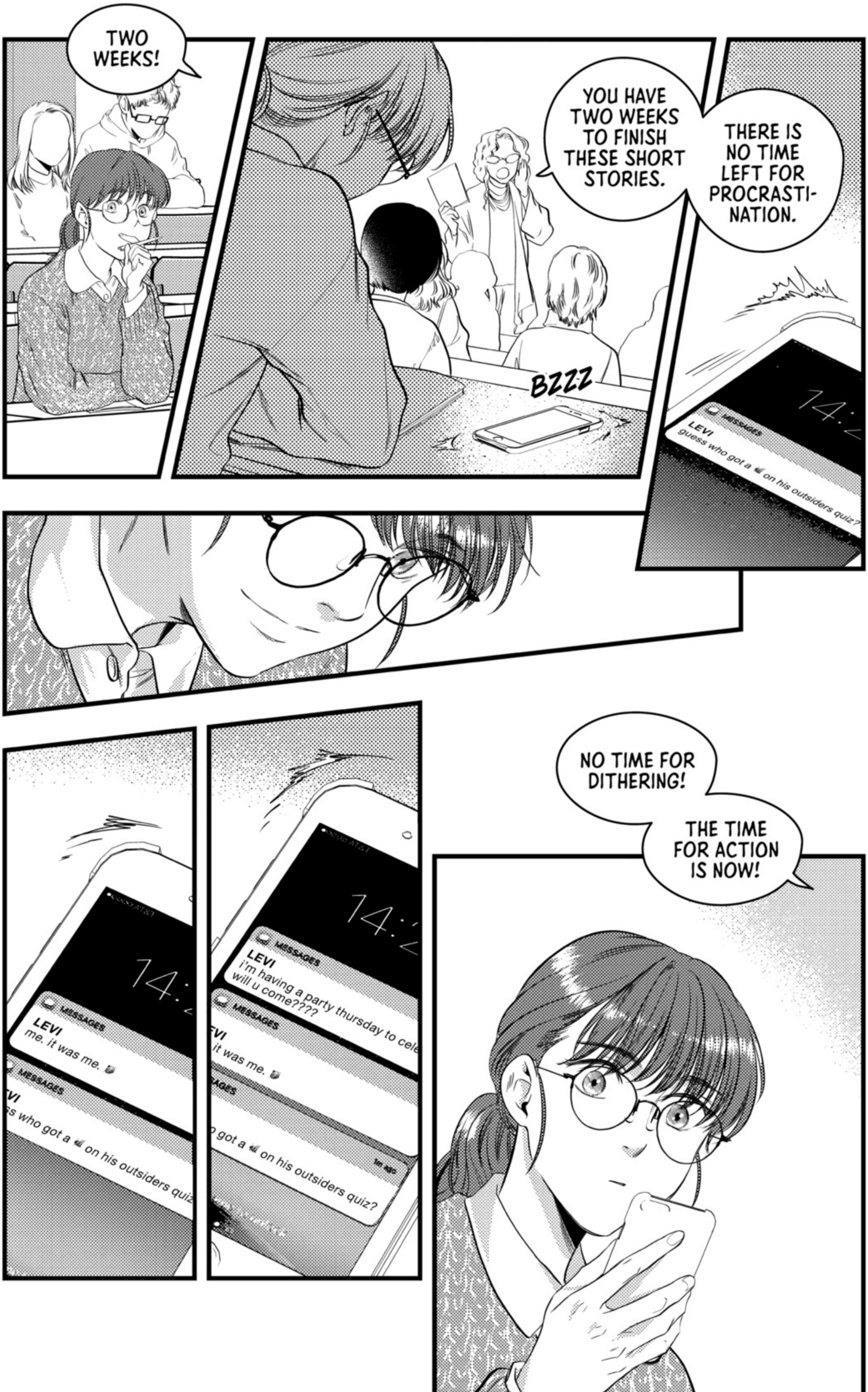

STOP CRYING. I MEAN IT.
HE'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND, CATH.
SOB
AND I KNEW HE LIKED YOU— HE WAS HERE CONSTANTLY.
I JUST DIDN'T KNOW YOU LIKED HIM BACK.
I THOUGHT HE WAS HERE CONSTANTLY *BECAUSE* HE WAS YOUR BOYFRIEND.
I DIDN'T *WANT* TO LIKE HIM BACK.
I TRIED TO BE MEAN TO HIM.
HA
I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST MEAN.
I LIKED THAT ABOUT YOU.


I'M OVER IT. I WAS JUST SURPRISED.
HOW CAN YOU BE OVER IT?
RUB
EVEN IF I DIDN'T KISS YOUR BOYFRIEND, I *THOUGHT* I WAS KISSING YOUR BOYFRIEND.
THAT'S HOW I WAS GOING TO REPAY YOU FOR ALL THE NICE THINGS YOU'VE DONE FOR ME!
WOW...
WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, IT *IS* PRETTY FUCKED UP...
I KNOW!
SO WHY DID YOU DO IT?


I...
I JUST REALLY, REALLY WANTED TO.


SIGH
OKAY, HERE'S THE DEAL.
I'M HUNGRY, AND I HAVE TO FINISH READING *THE OUTSIDERS.*
LEVI LIKES YOU, YOU LIKE HIM— I'M OVER IT.


IF HE WERE STILL MY BOYFRIEND, WE'D HAVE TO THROW DOWN.
BUT HE'S NOT.
LET'S JUST HAVE LUNCH, OKAY?
NOD


TWO WEEKS!
YOU HAVE TWO WEEKS TO FINISH THESE SHORT STORIES.
BZZZ
THERE IS NO TIME LEFT FOR PROCRASTINATION.
14:2
NO TIME FOR DITHERING!
THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW!

MESSAGES

LEVI

guess who got a on his outsiders quiz?

MESSAGES

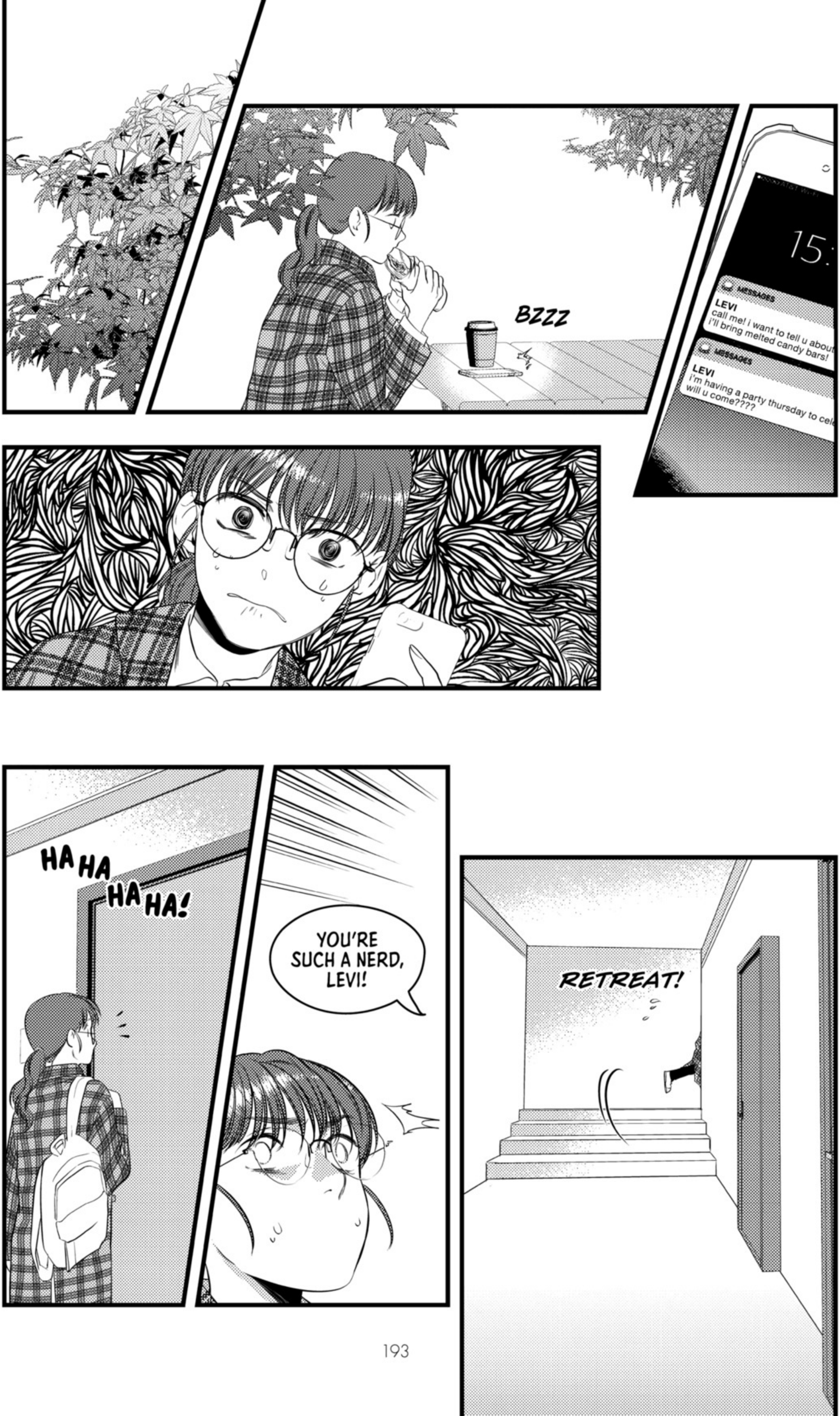
LEVI

me. it was me.

MESSAGES

LEVI

i'm having a party thursday to cele
will u come????

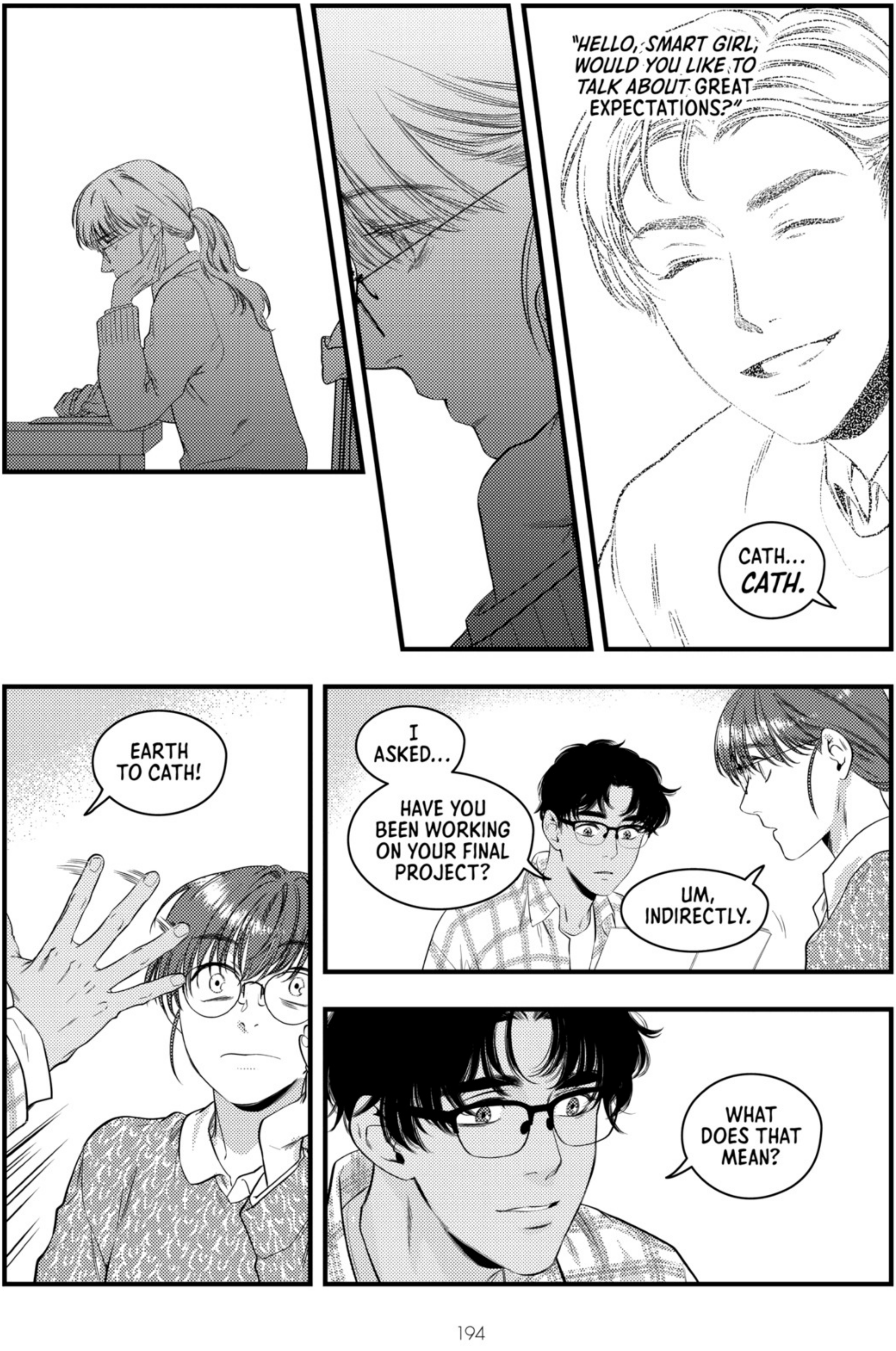

BZZZ
15:
MESSAGES

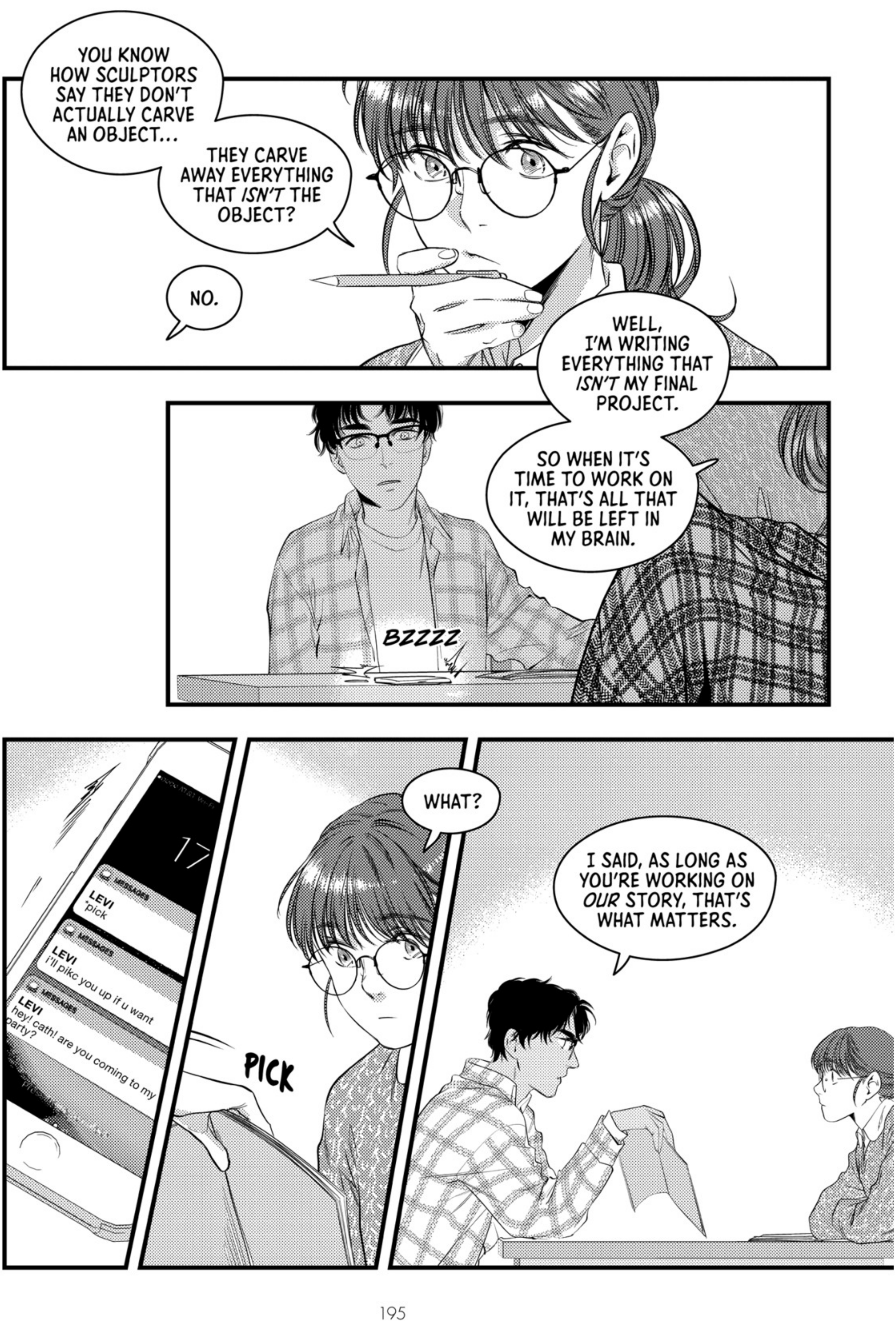
LEVI
call me! i want to tell u about
i'll bring melted candy bars!

MESSAGES

LEVI
i'm having a party thursday to cele
will u come????

HA HA HA HA!
YOU'RE SUCH A NERD, LEVI!
RETREAT!


"HELLO, SMART GIRL, WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT GREAT EXPECTATIONS?"
CATH... *CATH.*
EARTH TO CATH!
I ASKED...
HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON YOUR FINAL PROJECT?
UM, INDIRECTLY.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



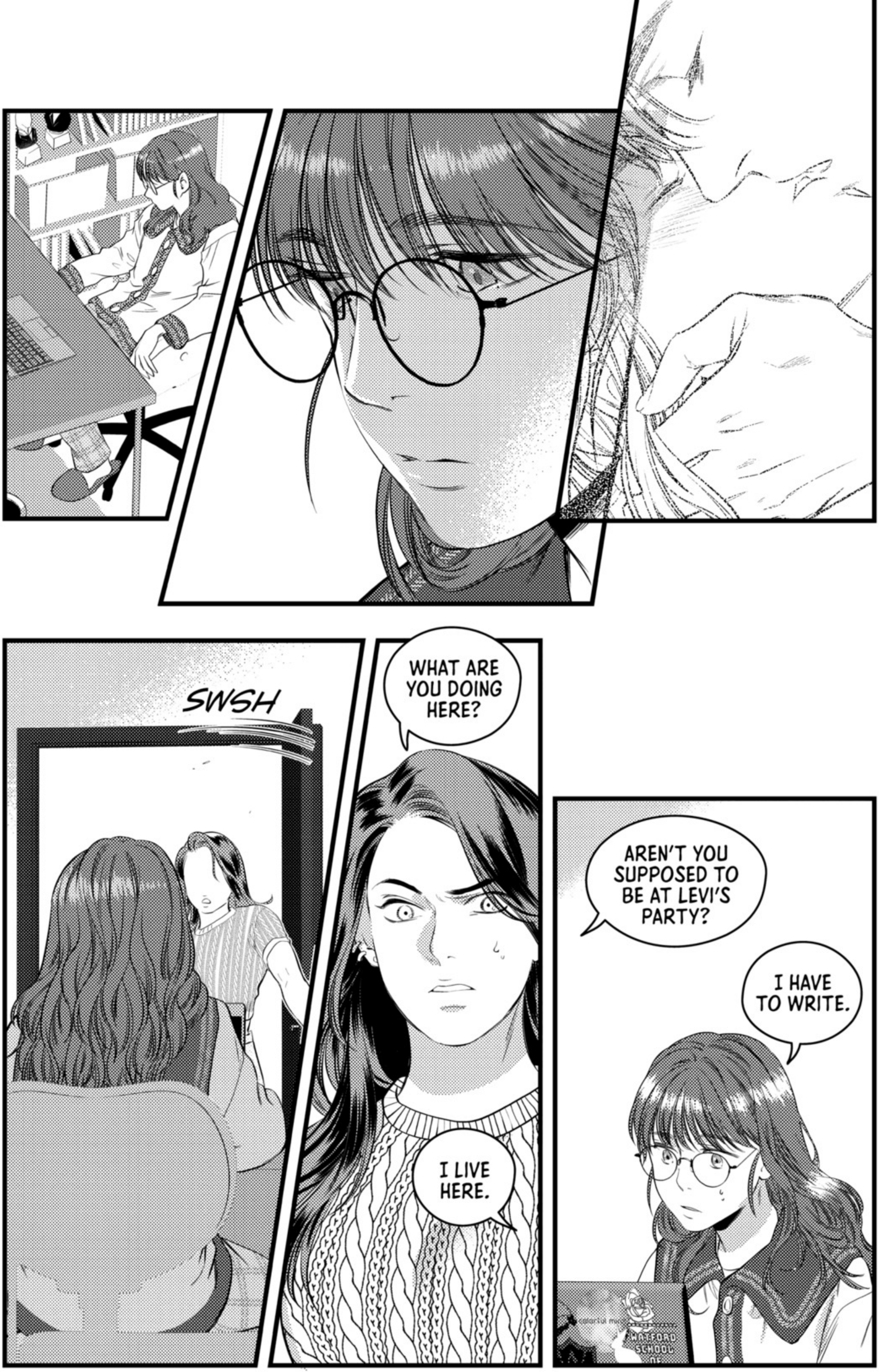
YOU KNOW HOW *SCULPTORS* SAY THEY DON'T ACTUALLY CARVE AN OBJECT...
THEY CARVE AWAY EVERYTHING THAT *ISN'T* THE OBJECT?
NO.
WELL, I'M WRITING EVERYTHING THAT *ISN'T* MY FINAL PROJECT.
SO WHEN IT'S TIME TO WORK ON IT, THAT'S ALL THAT WILL BE LEFT IN MY BRAIN.
BZZZZ
17
MESSAGES

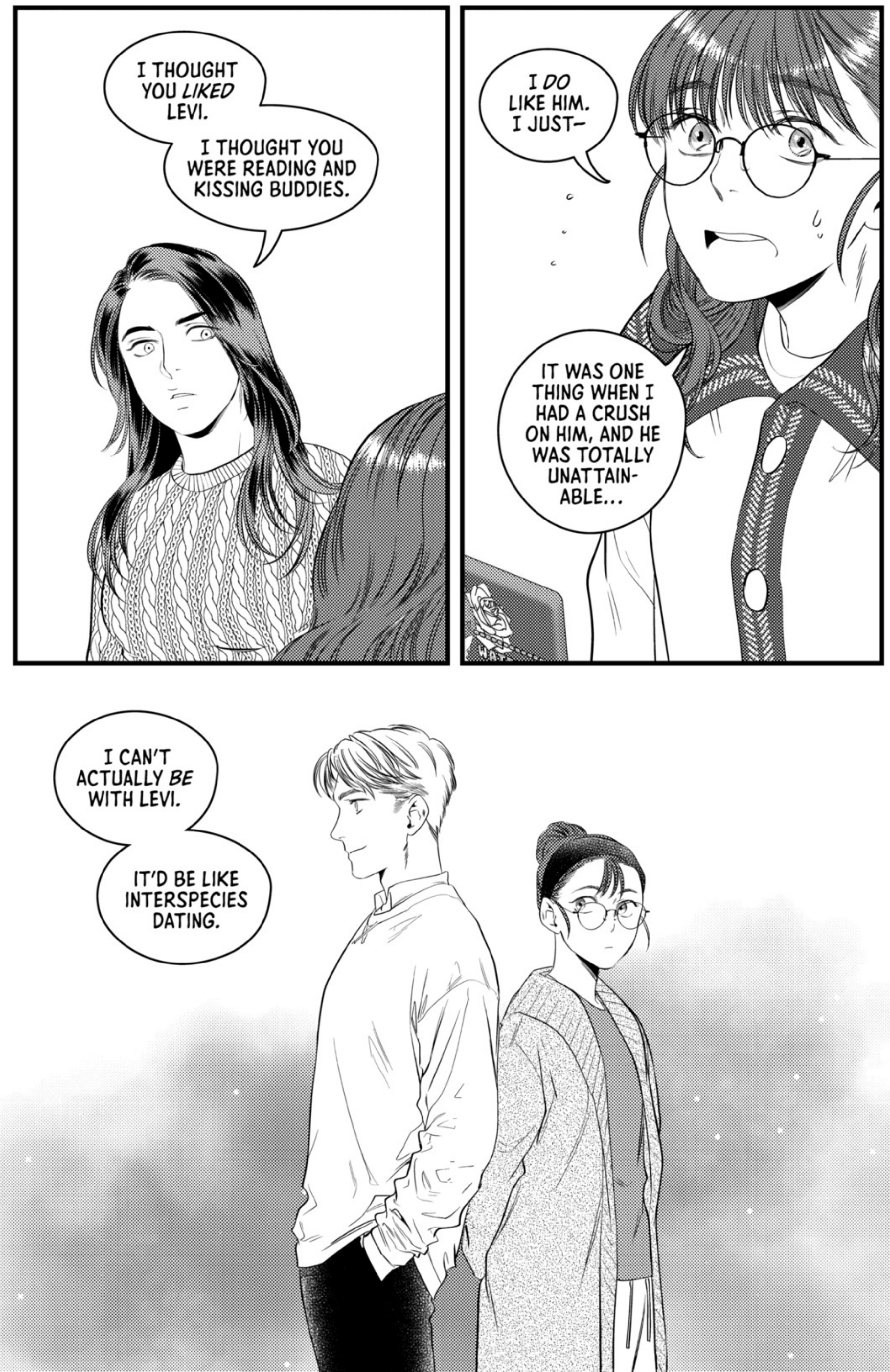
LEVI
*pick

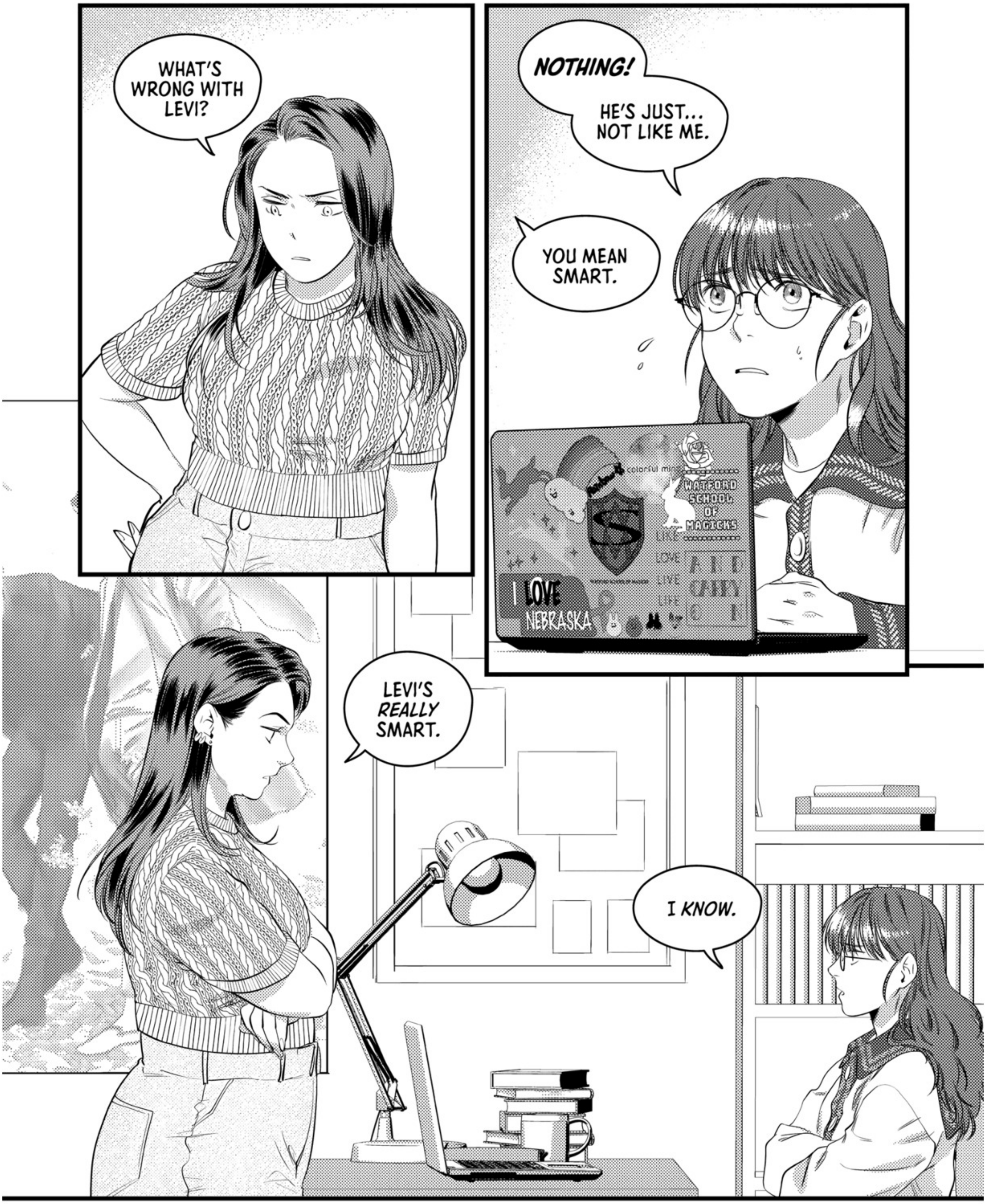
LEVI
i'll pikc you up if u want

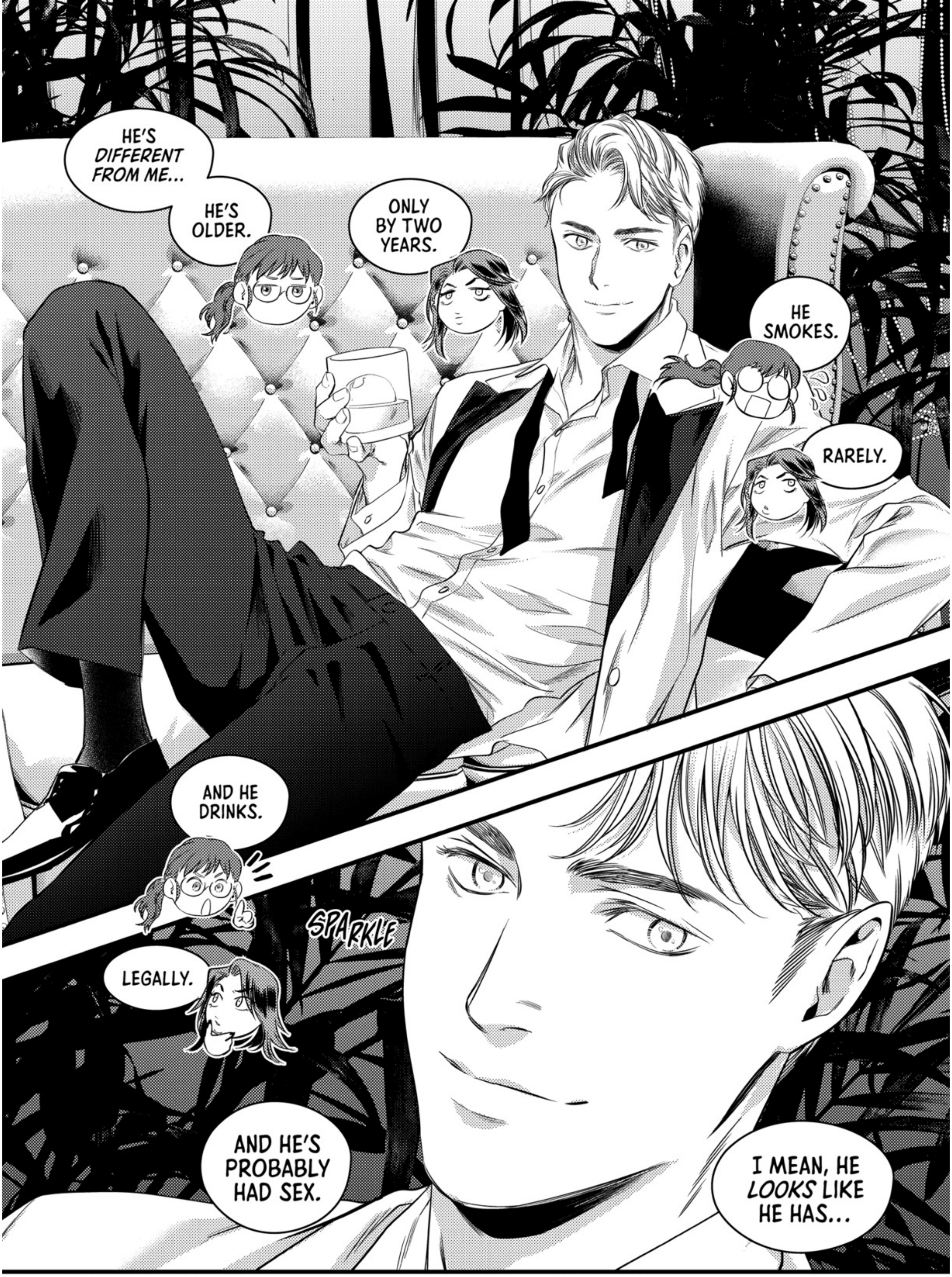
LEVI
hey! cath! are you coming to my party?

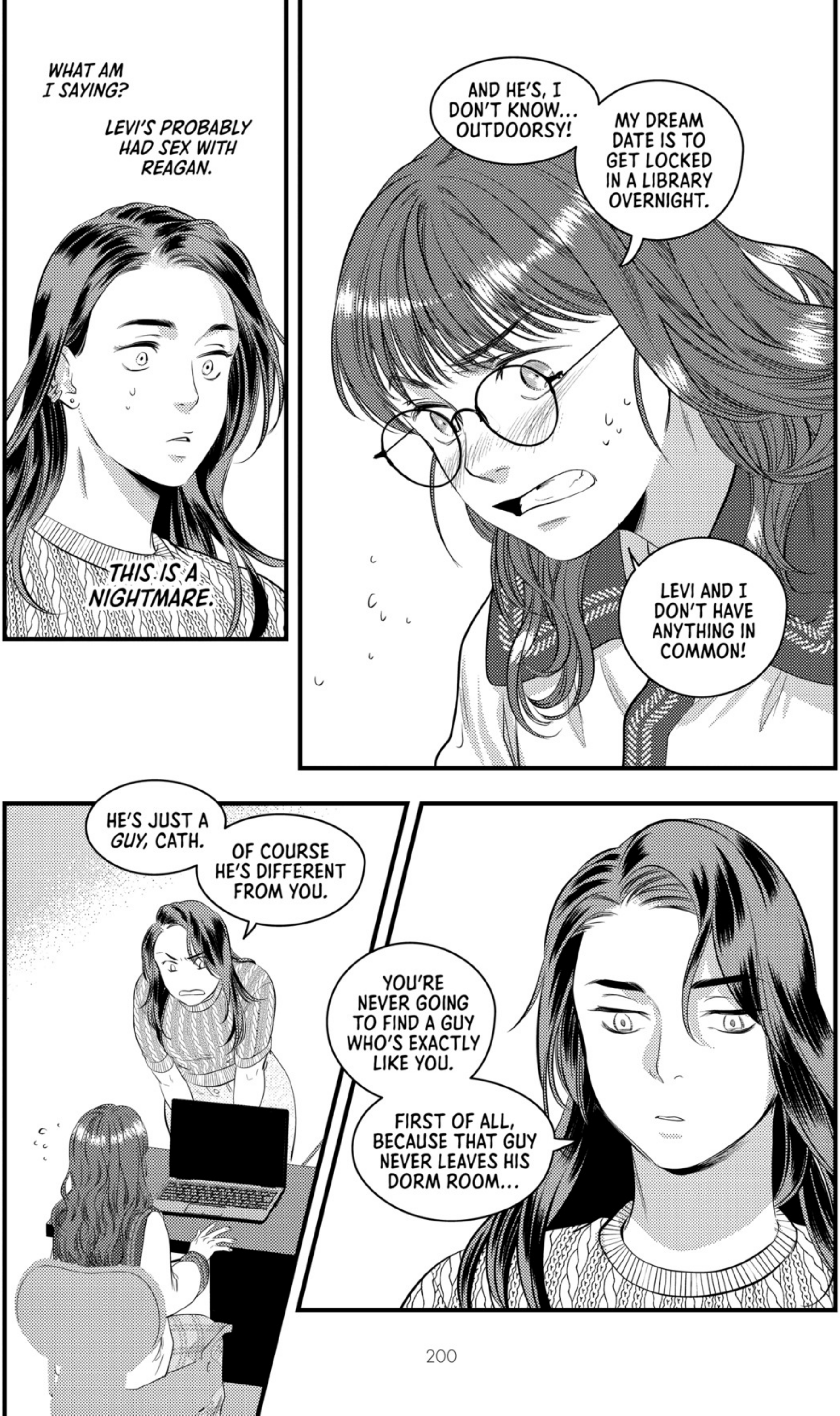
PICK
WHAT?
I SAID, AS LONG AS YOU'RE WORKING ON *OUR* STORY, THAT'S WHAT MATTERS.

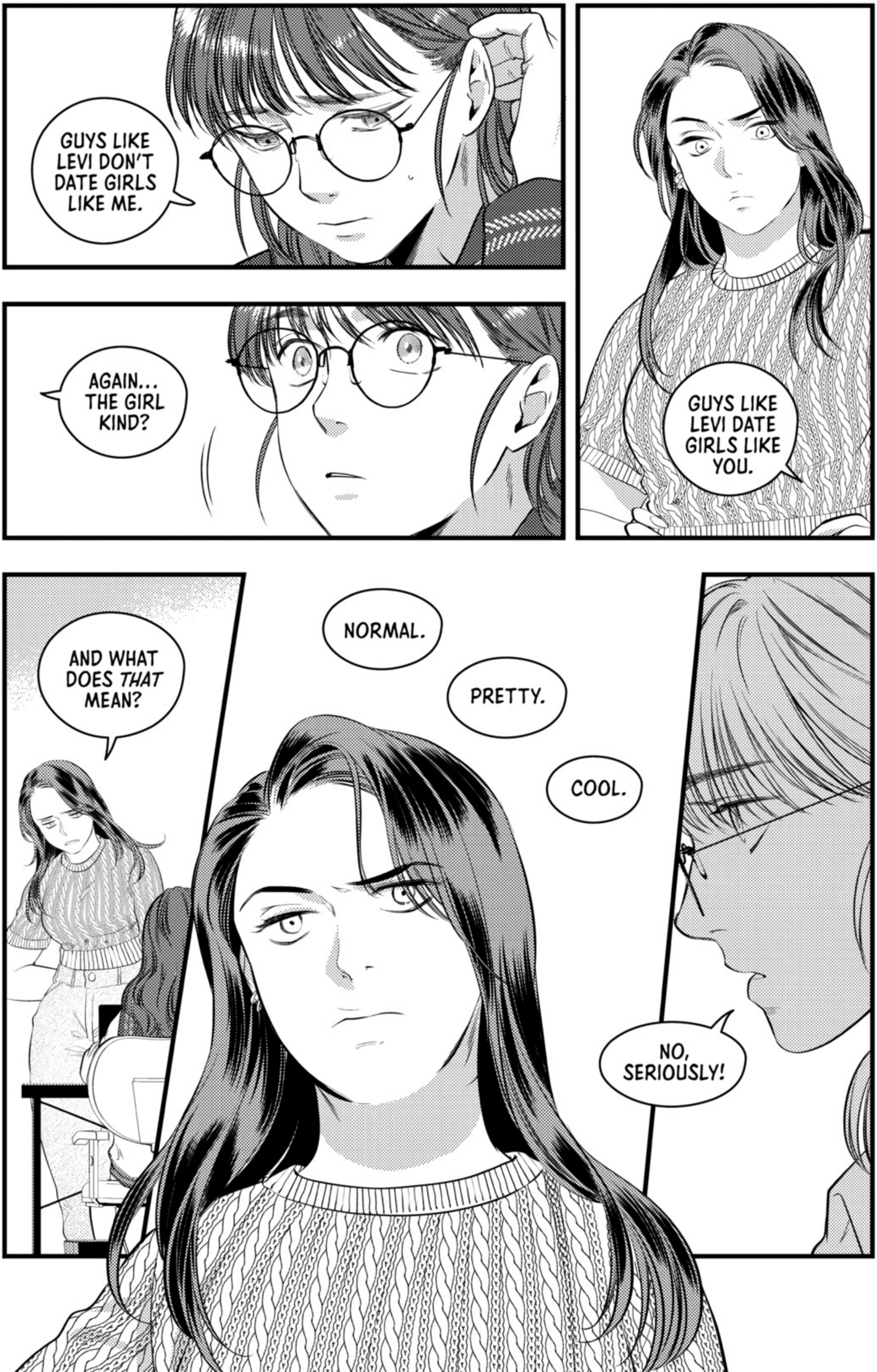

SWSH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I LIVE HERE.
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE AT LEVI'S PARTY?
I HAVE TO WRITE.
WATFORD SCHOOL OF

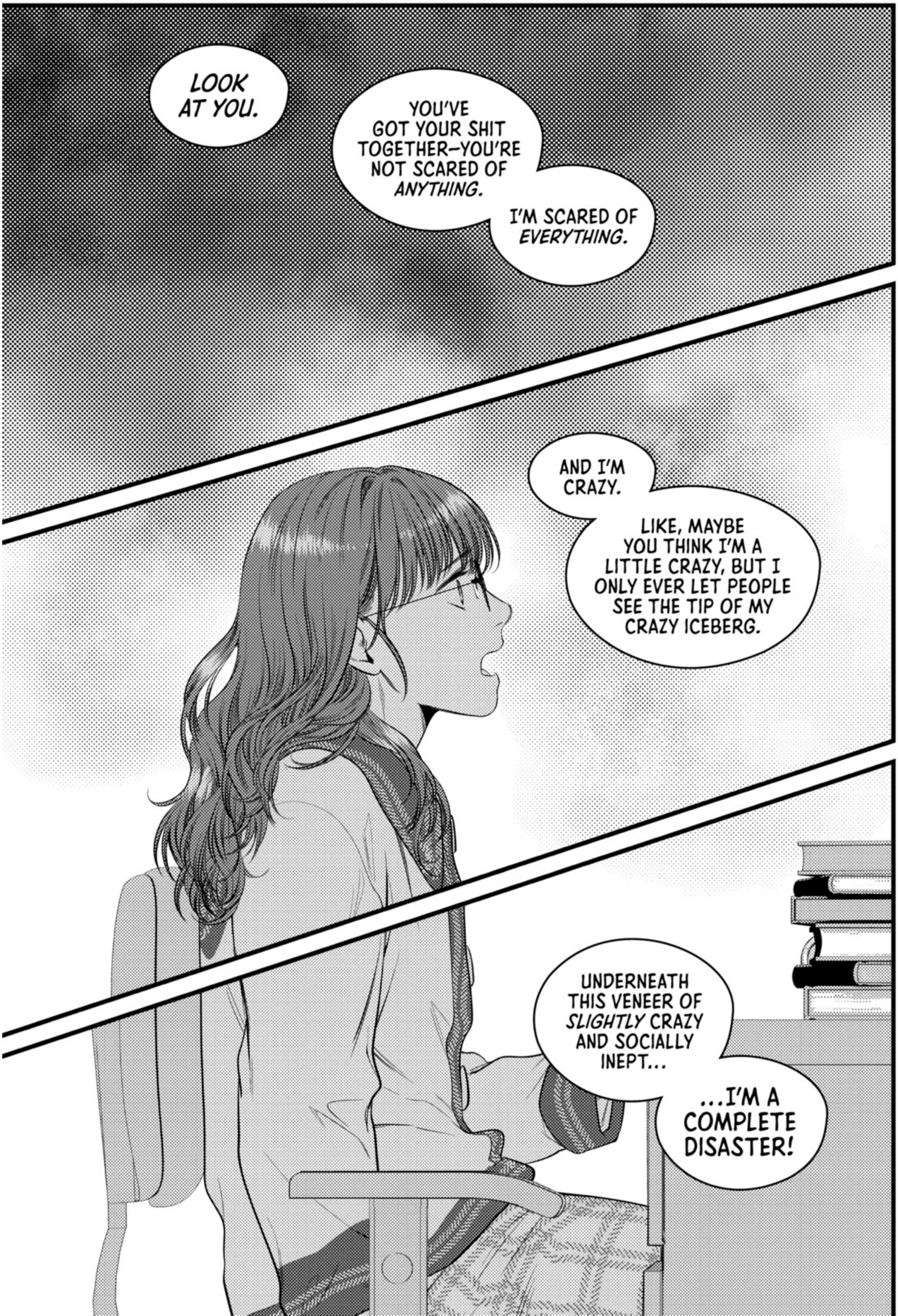

I THOUGHT YOU *LIKED* LEVI.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE READING AND KISSING BUDDIES.
I *DO* LIKE HIM. I JUST–
IT WAS ONE THING WHEN I HAD A CRUSH ON HIM, AND HE WAS TOTALLY UNATTAINABLE...
I CAN'T ACTUALLY *BE* WITH LEVI.
IT'D BE LIKE INTERSPECIES DATING.

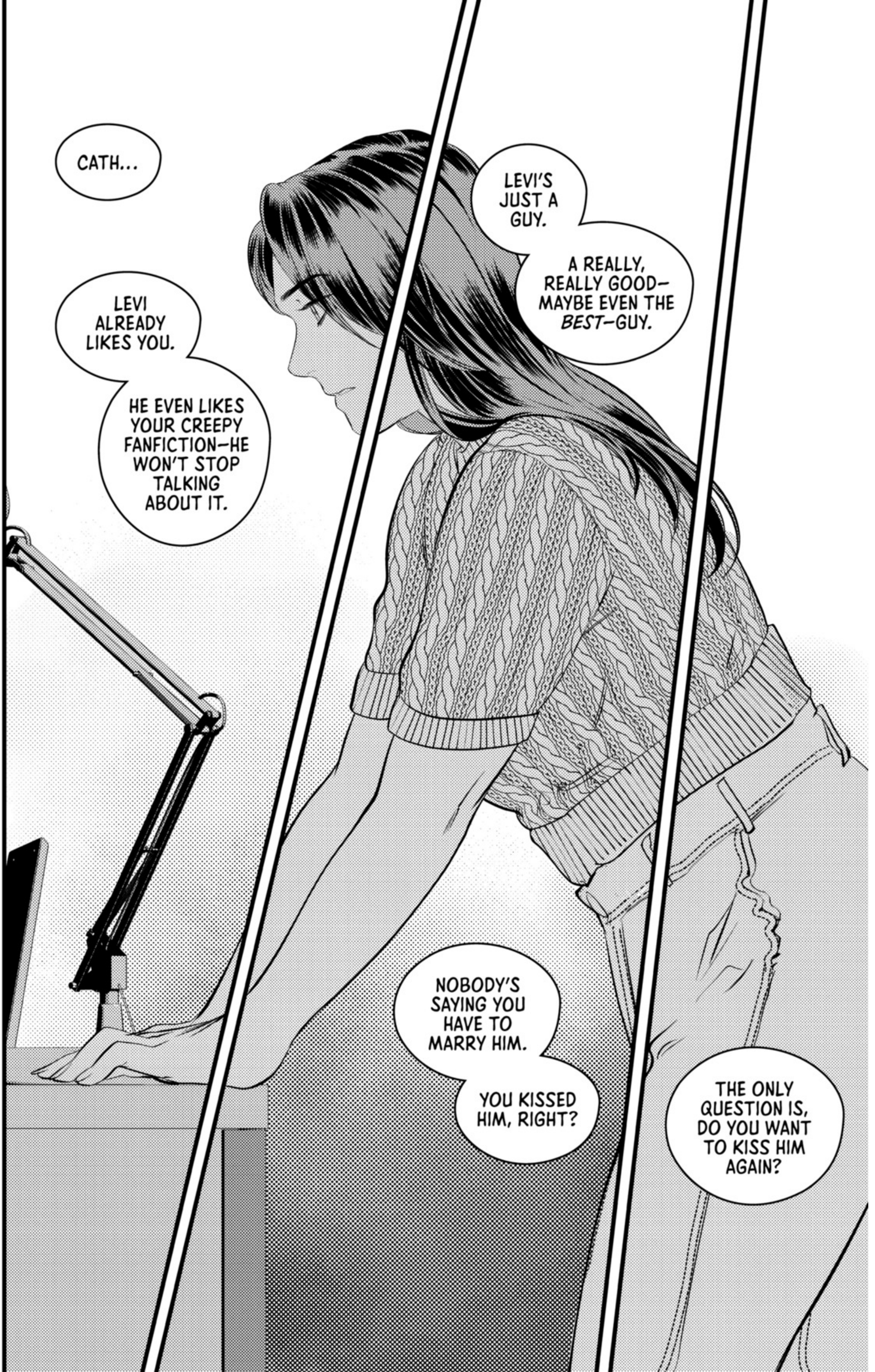

WHAT'S WRONG WITH LEVI?
NOTHING! HE'S JUST... NOT LIKE ME.
YOU MEAN SMART.
colorful mind
WATFORD SCHOOL OF MAGICKS
LIKE LOVE LIVE LIFE
I LOVE NEBRASKA
LEVI'S REALLY SMART.
I KNOW.

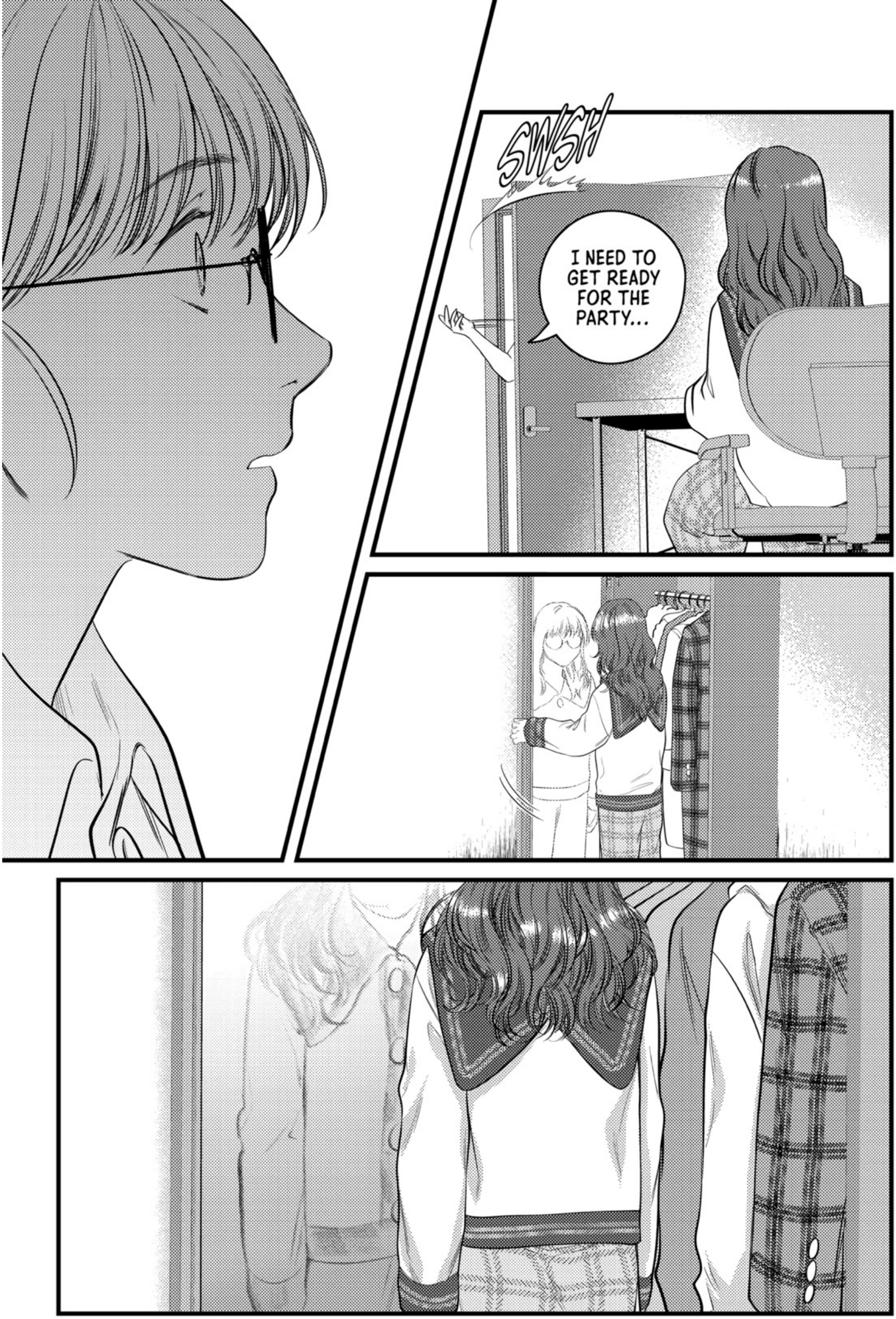

HE'S *DIFFERENT* *FROM ME...*
HE'S OLDER.
ONLY BY TWO YEARS.
HE SMOKES.
RARELY.
AND HE DRINKS.
LEGALLY.
SPARKLE
AND HE'S PROBABLY HAD SEX.
I MEAN, HE *LOOKS* LIKE HE HAS...

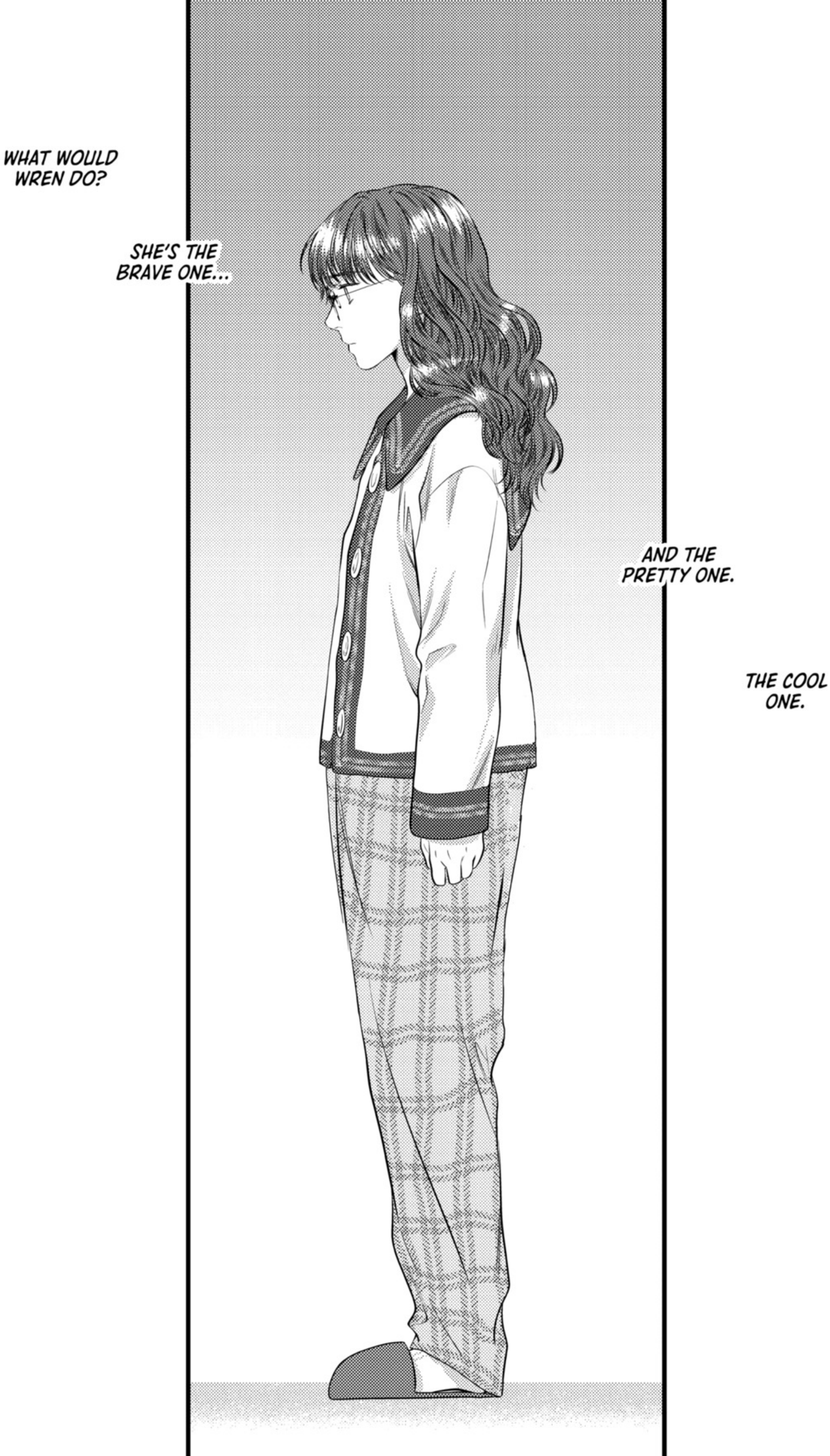

WHAT AM I SAYING?
LEVI'S PROBABLY HAD SEX WITH REAGAN.
THIS IS A NIGHTMARE.
AND HE'S, I DON'T KNOW... OUTDOORSY!
MY DREAM DATE IS TO GET LOCKED IN A LIBRARY OVERNIGHT.
LEVI AND I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING IN COMMON!
HE'S JUST A GUY, CATH.
OF COURSE HE'S DIFFERENT FROM YOU.
YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO FIND A GUY WHO'S EXACTLY LIKE YOU.
FIRST OF ALL, BECAUSE THAT GUY NEVER LEAVES HIS DORM ROOM...

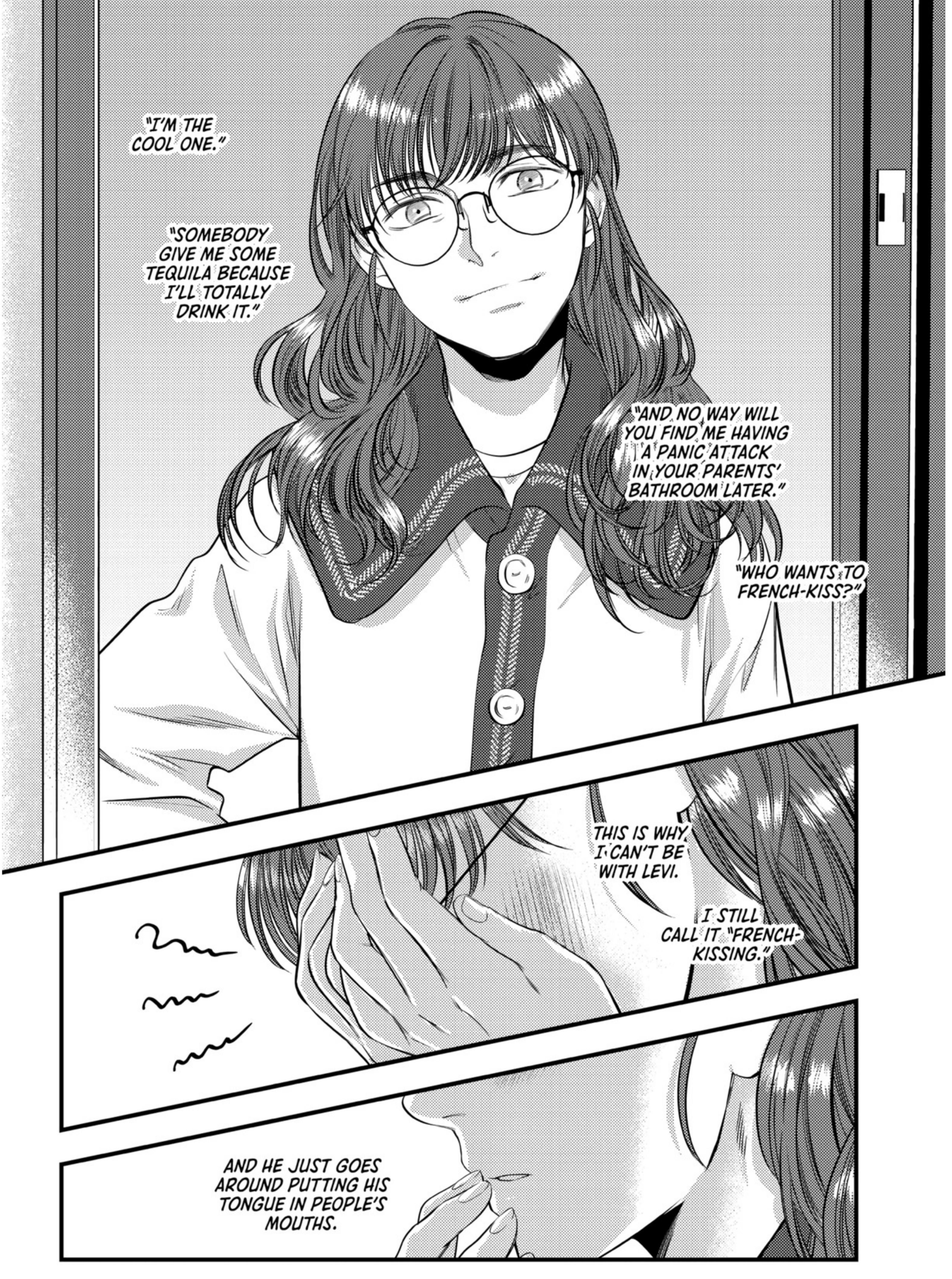

GUYS LIKE LEVI DON'T DATE GIRLS LIKE ME.
AGAIN... THE GIRL KIND?
GUYS LIKE LEVI DATE GIRLS LIKE YOU.
AND WHAT DOES *THAT* MEAN?
NORMAL.
PRETTY.
COOL.
NO, SERIOUSLY!

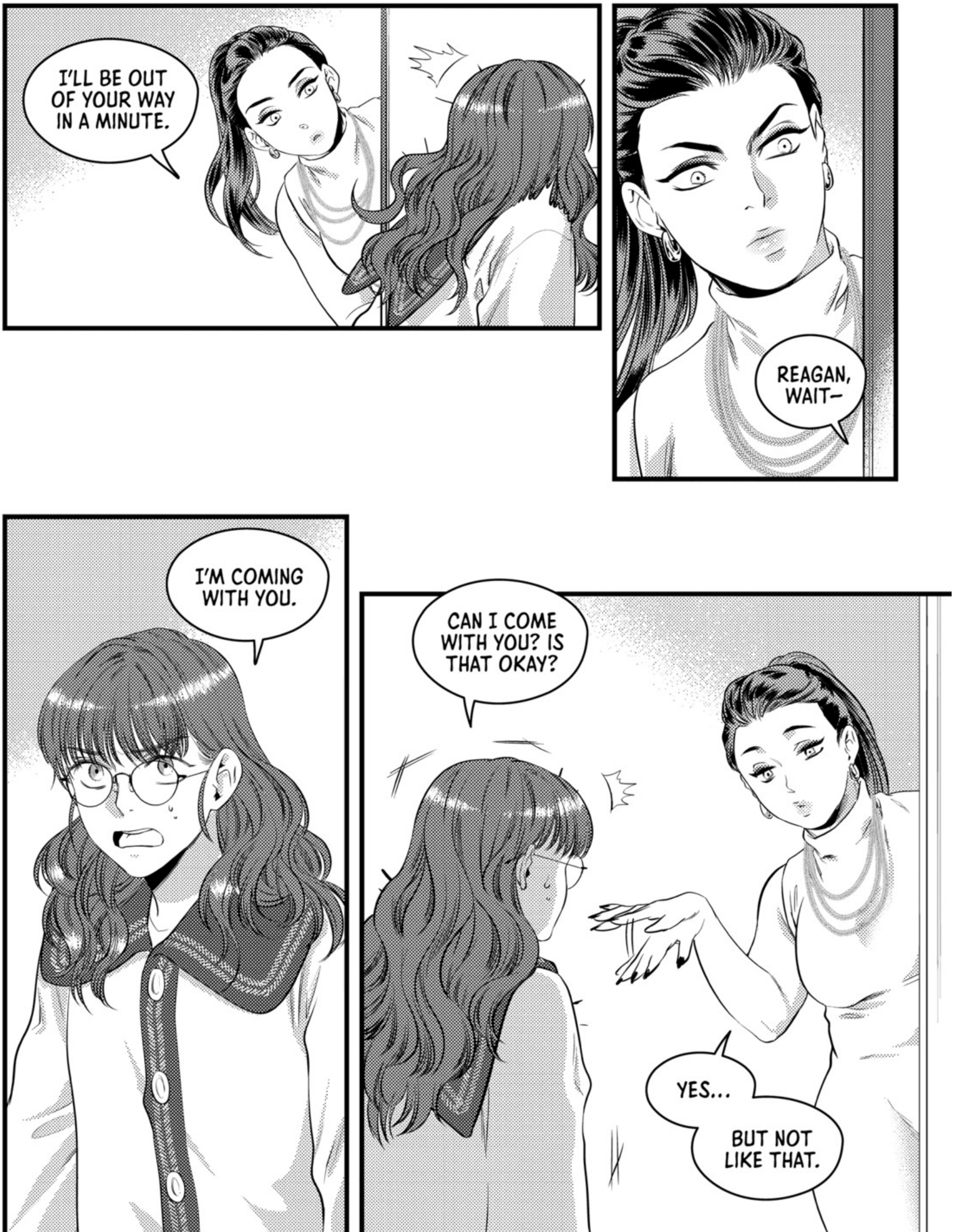

LOOK AT YOU.
YOU'VE GOT YOUR SHIT TOGETHER—YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF *ANYTHING*.
I'M SCARED OF *EVERYTHING*.
AND I'M CRAZY.
LIKE, MAYBE YOU THINK I'M A LITTLE CRAZY, BUT I ONLY EVER LET PEOPLE SEE THE TIP OF MY CRAZY ICEBERG.
UNDERNEATH THIS VENEER OF *SLIGHTLY* CRAZY AND SOCIALLY INEPT...
...I'M A COMPLETE DISASTER!

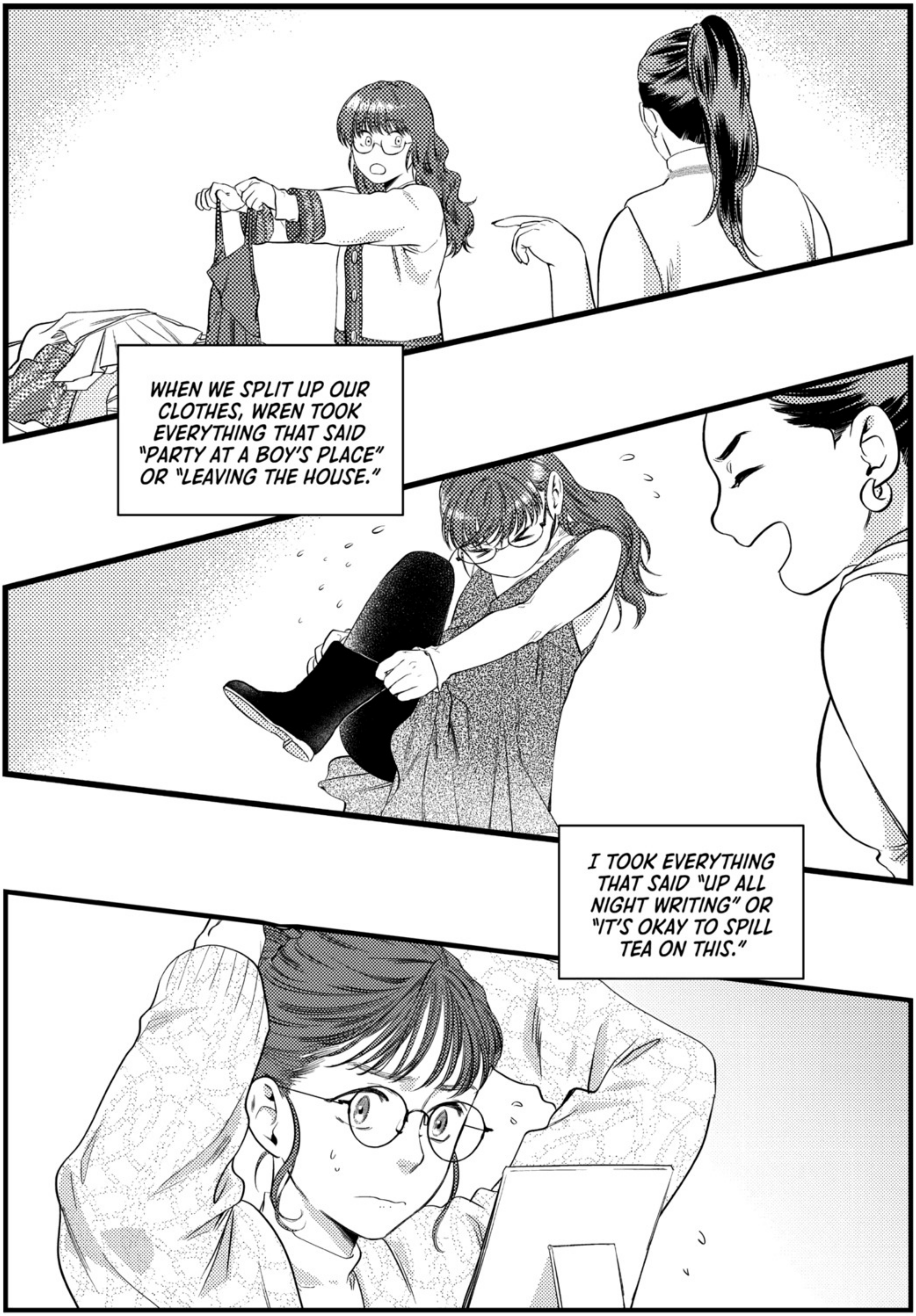

CATH...
LEVI'S JUST A GUY.
A REALLY, REALLY GOOD—MAYBE EVEN THE *BEST*—GUY.
LEVI ALREADY LIKES YOU.
HE EVEN LIKES YOUR CREEPY FANFICTION—HE WON'T *STOP* TALKING ABOUT IT.
NOBODY'S SAYING YOU HAVE TO MARRY HIM.
YOU KISSED HIM, RIGHT?
THE ONLY QUESTION IS, DO YOU WANT TO KISS HIM AGAIN?

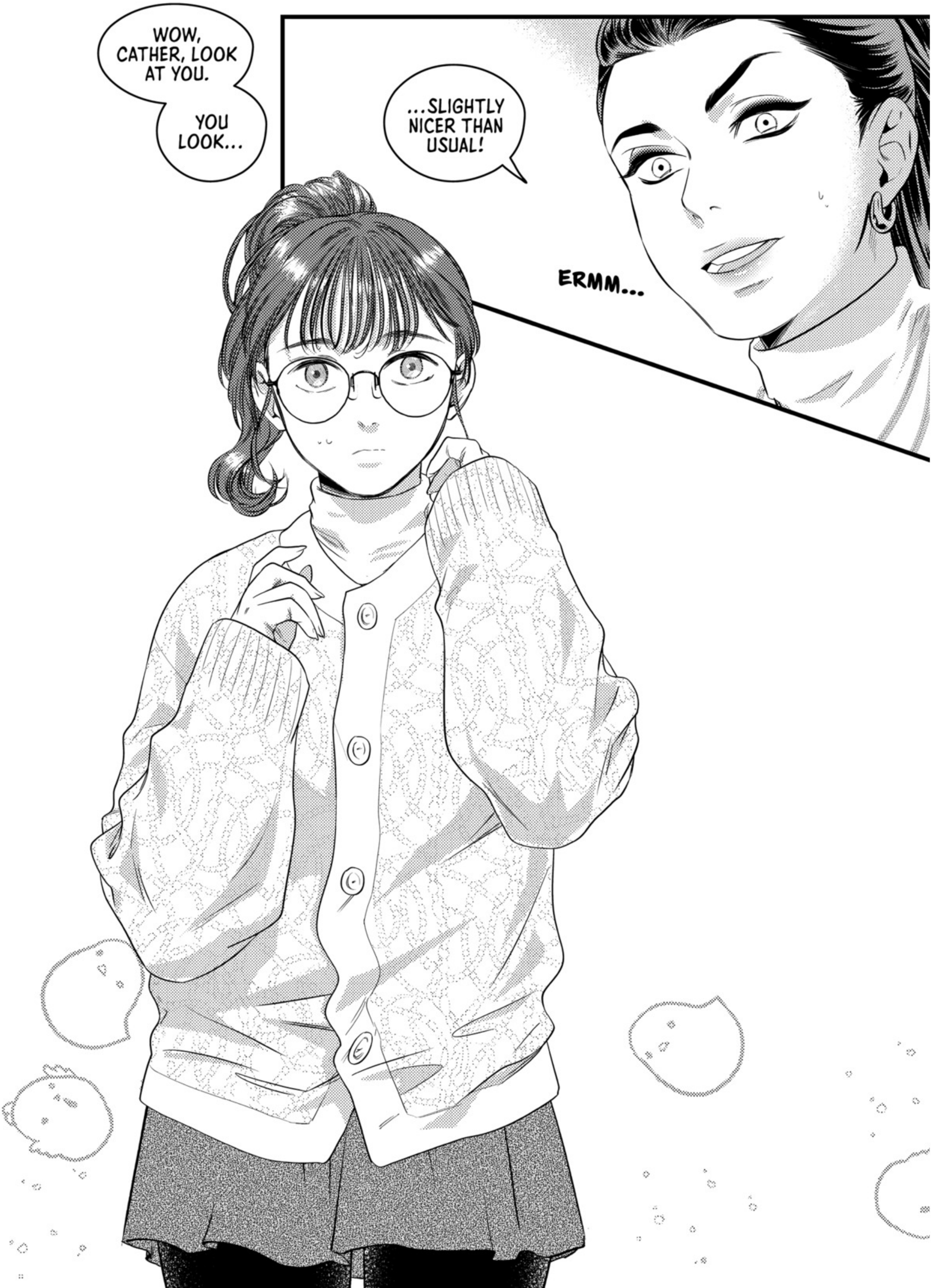

SWSH
I NEED TO GET READY FOR THE PARTY...

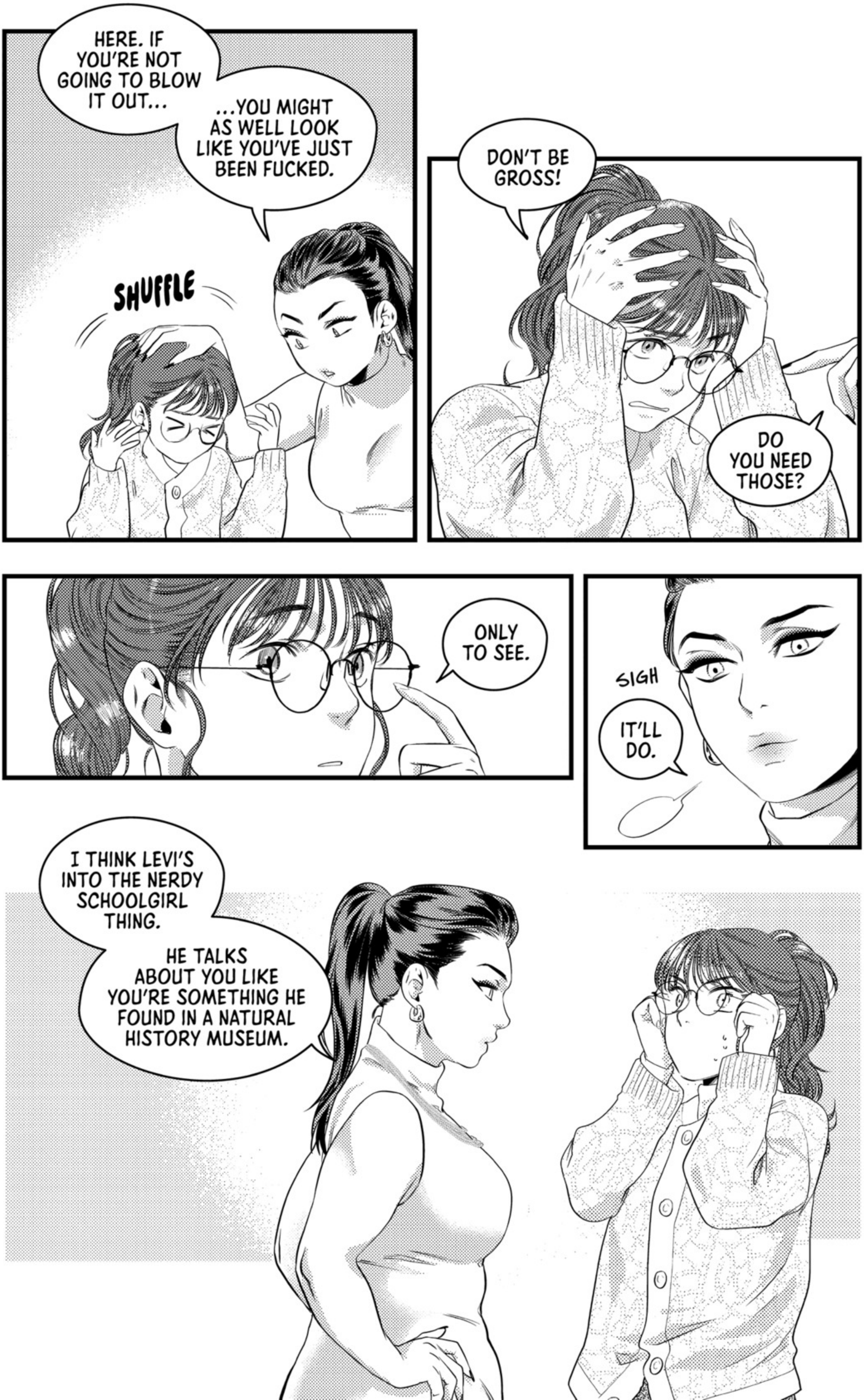

WHAT WOULD WREN DO?
SHE'S THE BRAVE ONE...
AND THE PRETTY ONE.
THE COOL ONE.

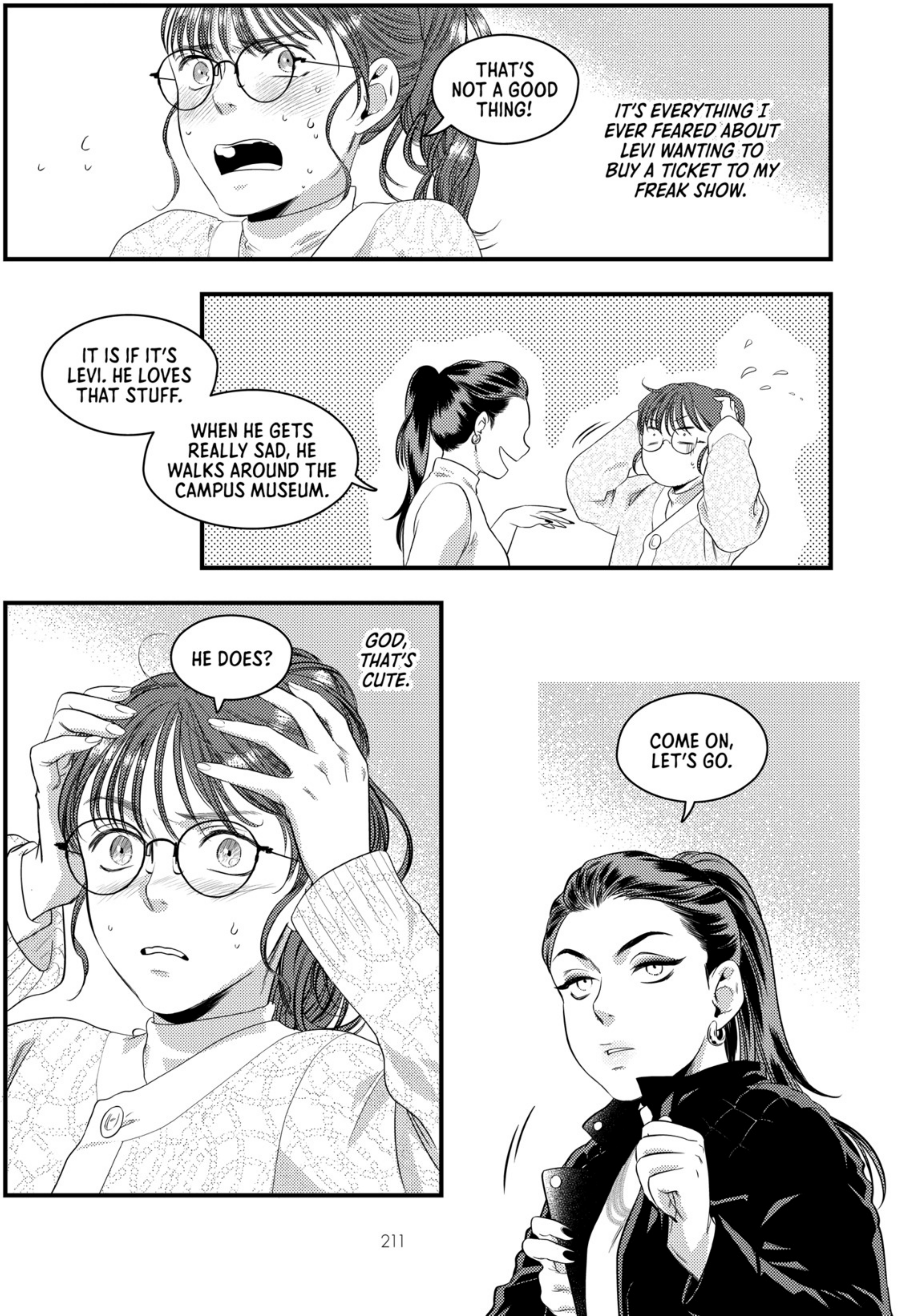

"I'M THE COOL ONE."
"SOMEBODY GIVE ME SOME TEQUILA BECAUSE I'LL TOTALLY DRINK IT."
"AND NO WAY WILL YOU FIND ME HAVING A PANIC ATTACK IN YOUR PARENTS' BATHROOM LATER."
"WHO WANTS TO FRENCH-KISS?"
THIS IS WHY I CAN'T BE WITH LEVI.
I STILL CALL IT "FRENCH-KISSING."
AND HE JUST GOES AROUND PUTTING HIS TONGUE IN PEOPLE'S MOUTHS.

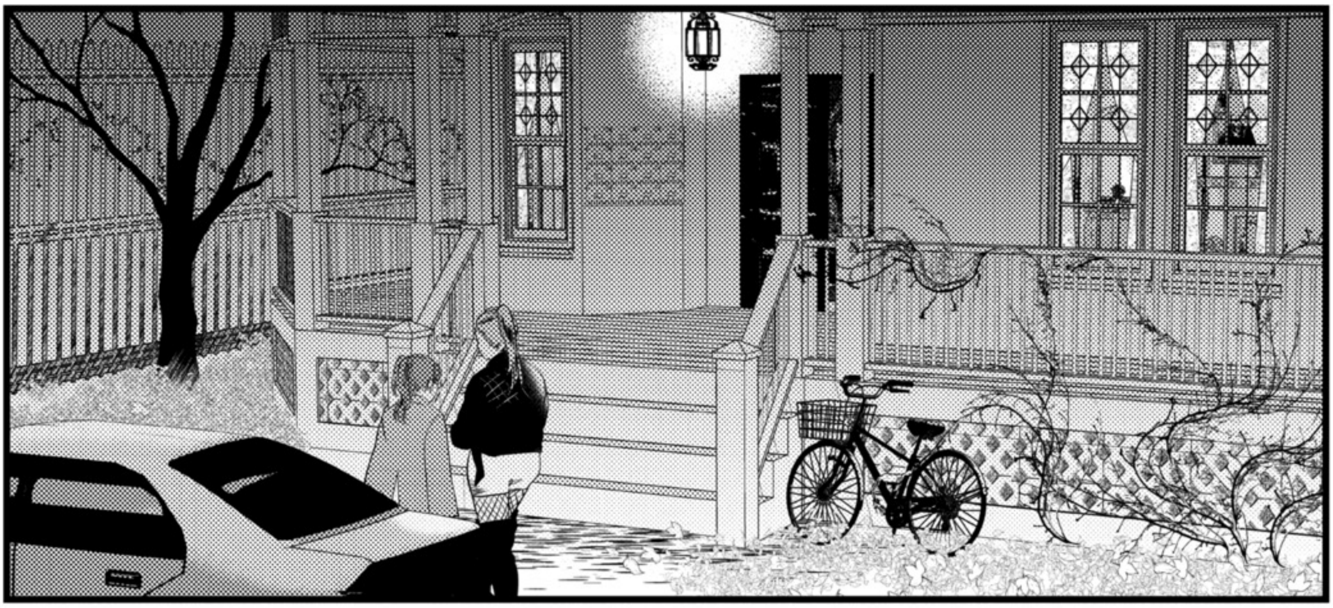

I'LL BE OUT OF YOUR WAY IN A MINUTE.
REAGAN, WAIT–
I'M COMING WITH YOU.
CAN I COME WITH YOU? IS THAT OKAY?
YES...
BUT NOT LIKE THAT.

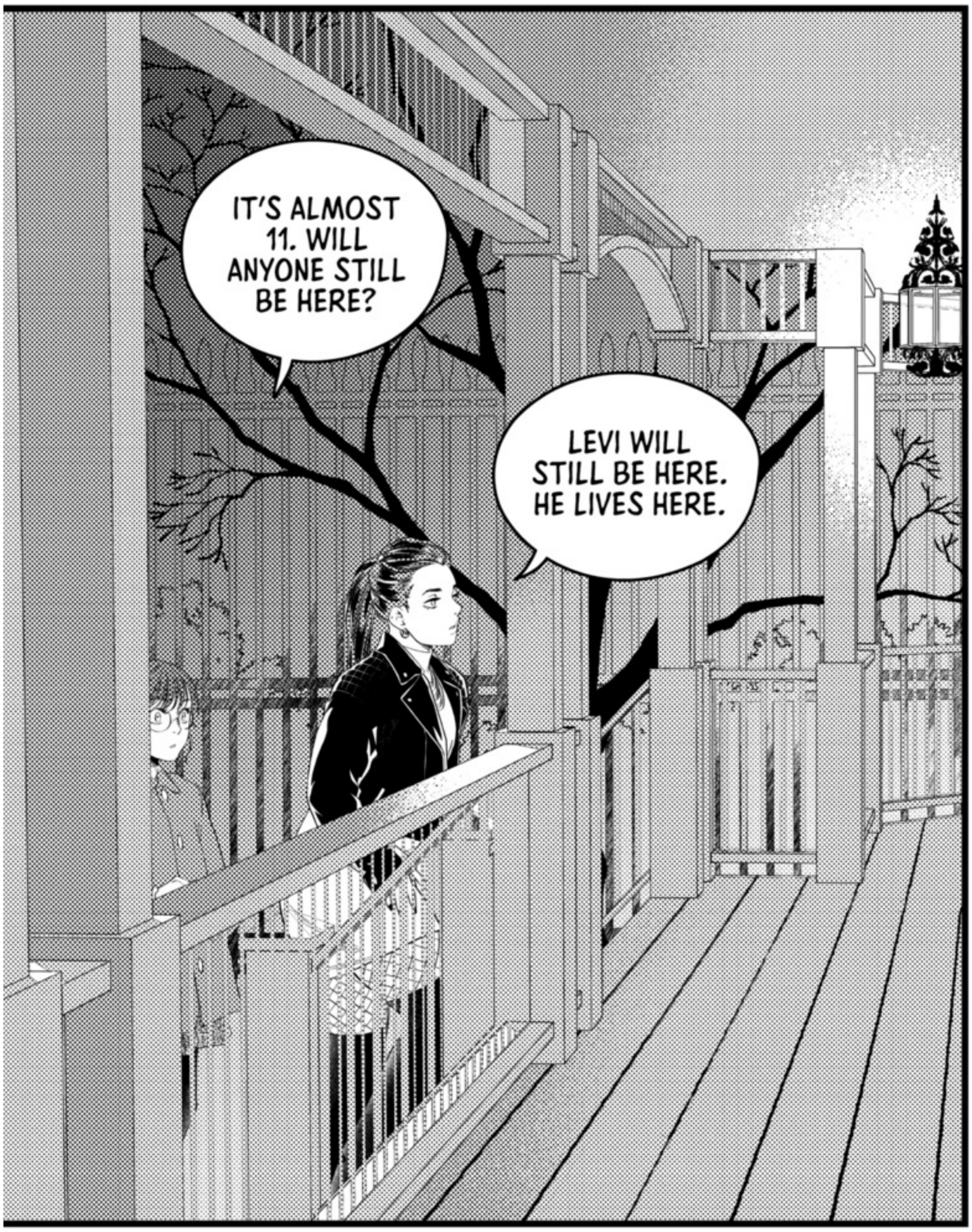

WHEN WE SPLIT UP OUR CLOTHES, WREN TOOK EVERYTHING THAT SAID "PARTY AT A BOY'S PLACE" OR "LEAVING THE HOUSE."
I TOOK EVERYTHING THAT SAID "UP ALL NIGHT WRITING" OR "IT'S OKAY TO SPILL TEA ON THIS."


WOW, CATHER, LOOK AT YOU.
YOU LOOK...
...SLIGHTLY NICER THAN USUAL!
ERMM...


HERE. IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BLOW IT OUT...
...YOU MIGHT AS WELL LOOK LIKE YOU'VE JUST BEEN FUCKED.
SHUFFLE
DON'T BE GROSS!
DO YOU NEED THOSE?
ONLY TO SEE.
SIGH
IT'LL DO.
I THINK LEVI'S INTO THE NERDY SCHOOLGIRL THING.
HE TALKS ABOUT YOU LIKE YOU'RE SOMETHING HE FOUND IN A NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM.


THAT'S NOT A GOOD THING!
IT'S EVERYTHING I EVER FEARED ABOUT LEVI WANTING TO BUY A TICKET TO MY FREAK SHOW.
IT IS IF IT'S LEVI. HE LOVES THAT STUFF.
WHEN HE GETS REALLY SAD, HE WALKS AROUND THE CAMPUS MUSEUM.
HE DOES?
GOD, THAT'S CUTE.
COME ON, LET'S GO.

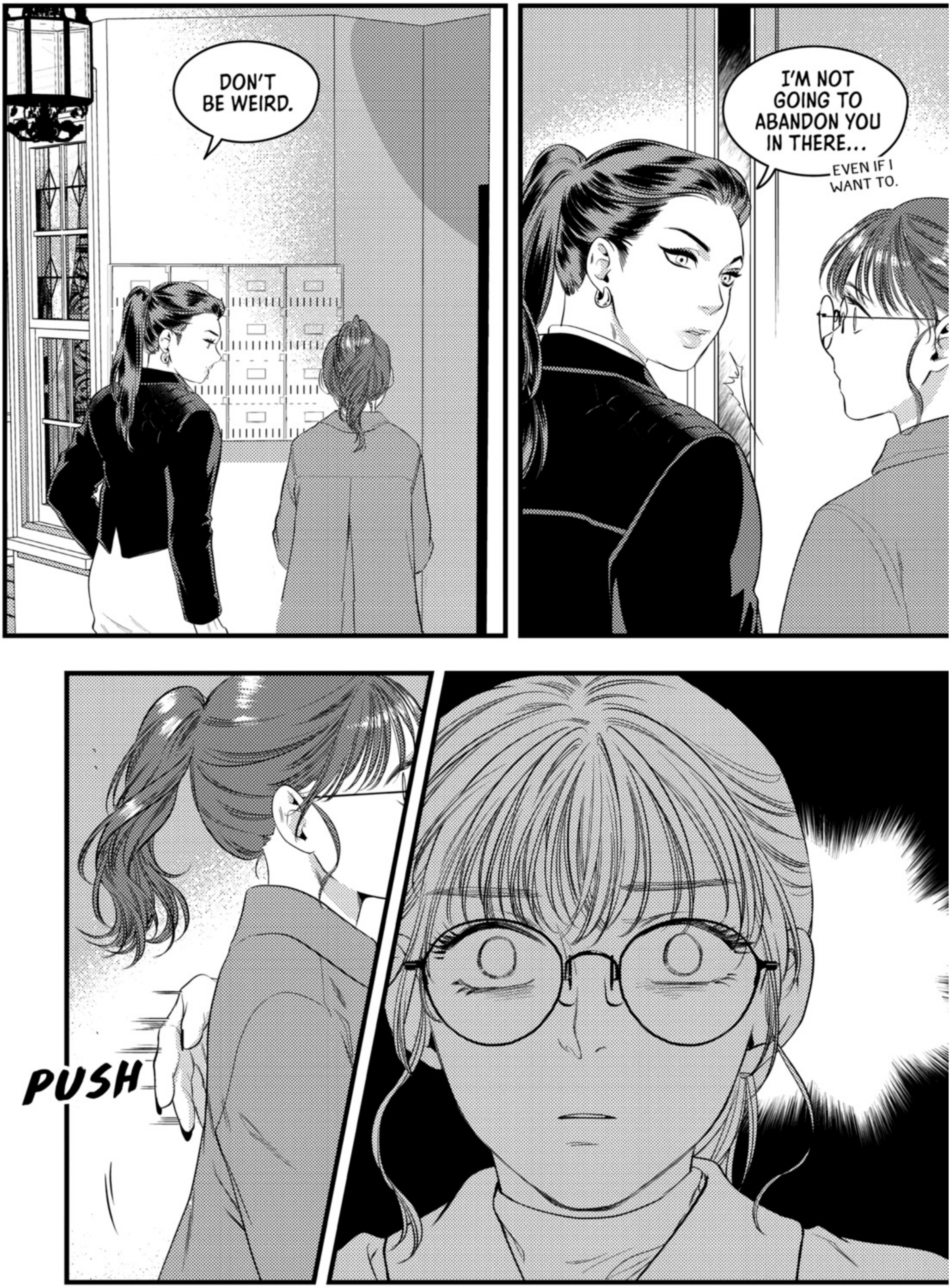


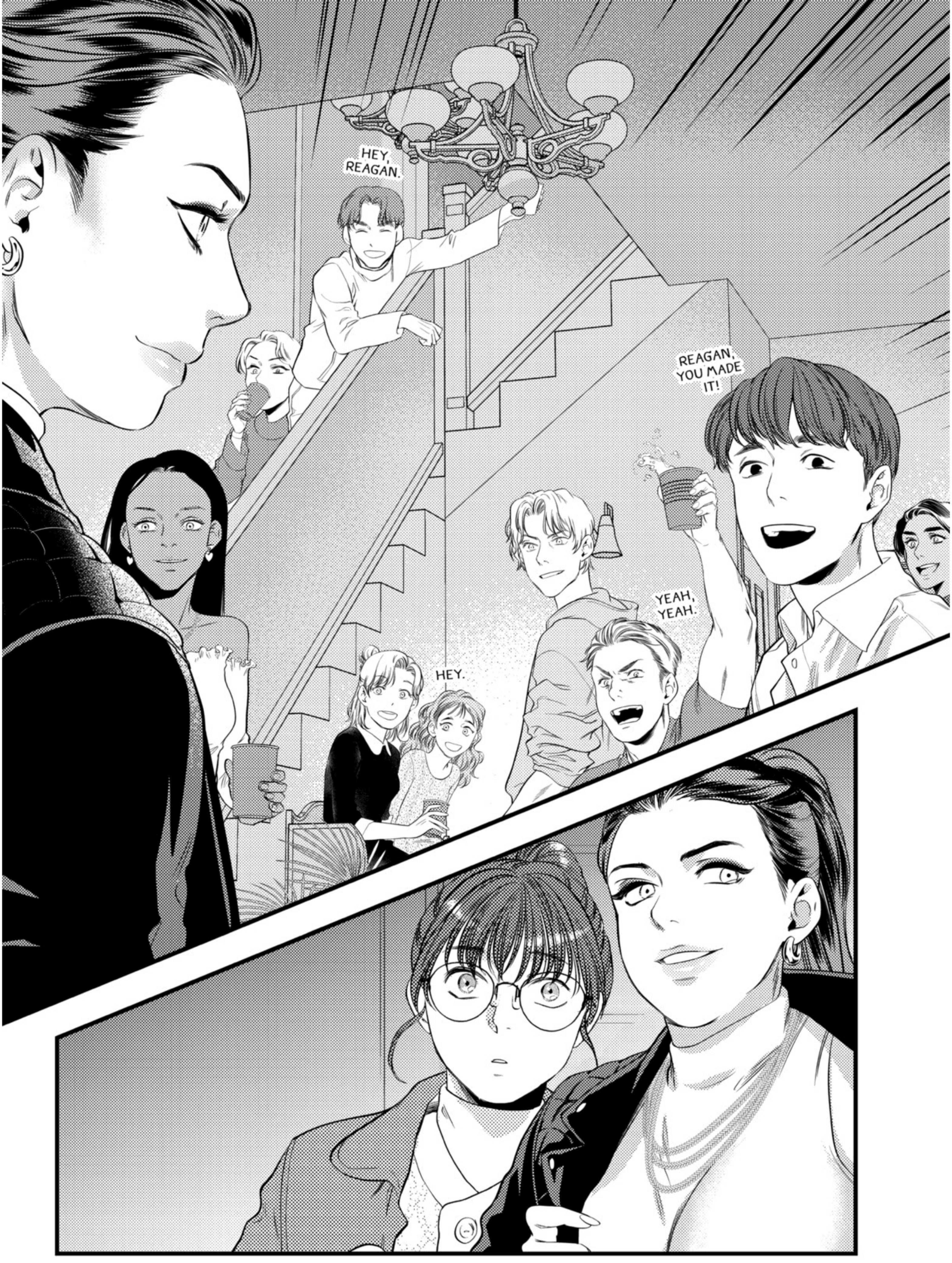

IT'S ALMOST 11. WILL ANYONE STILL BE HERE?
LEVI WILL STILL BE HERE. HE LIVES HERE.

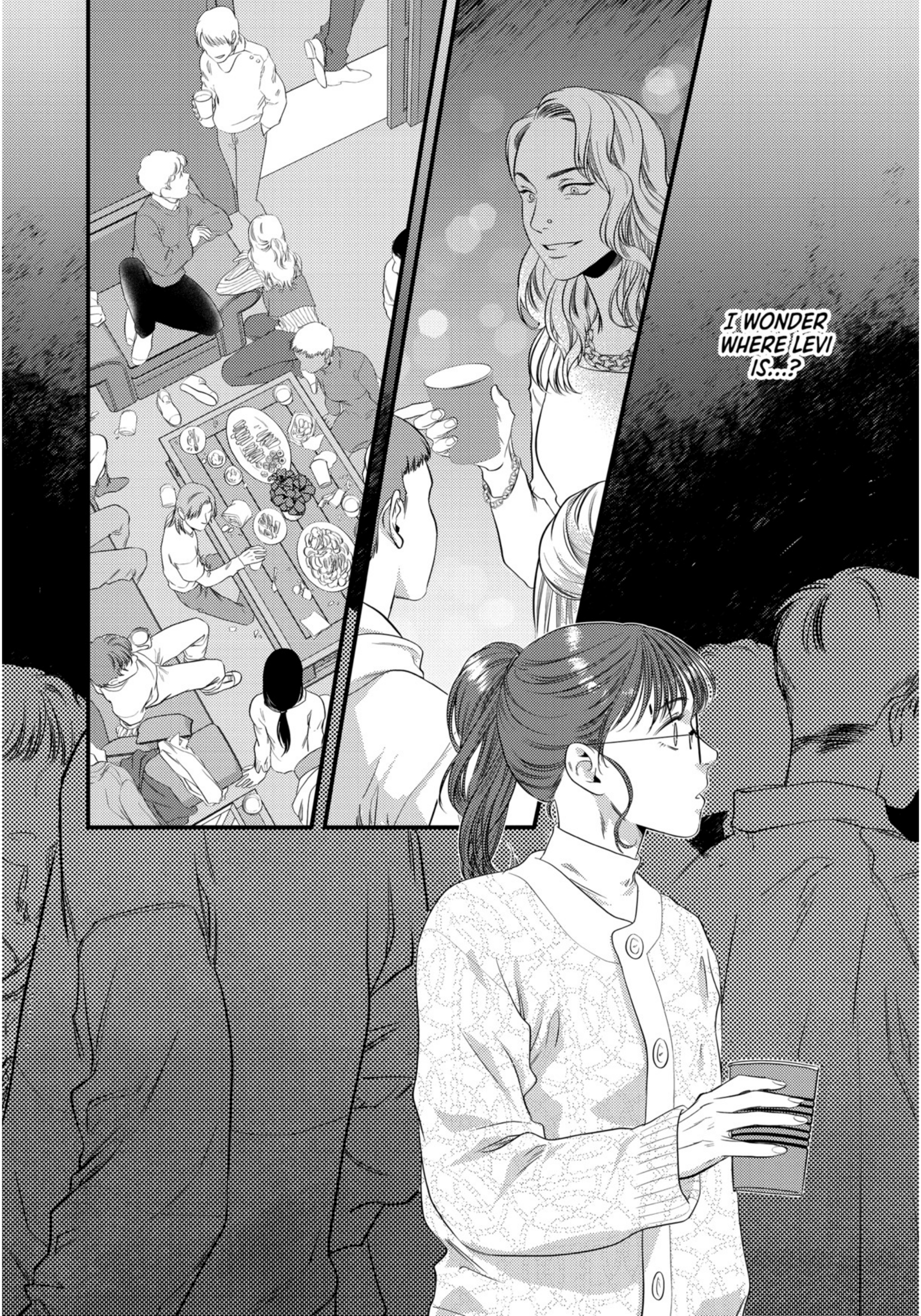
PARTY. BOY. STRANGERS.

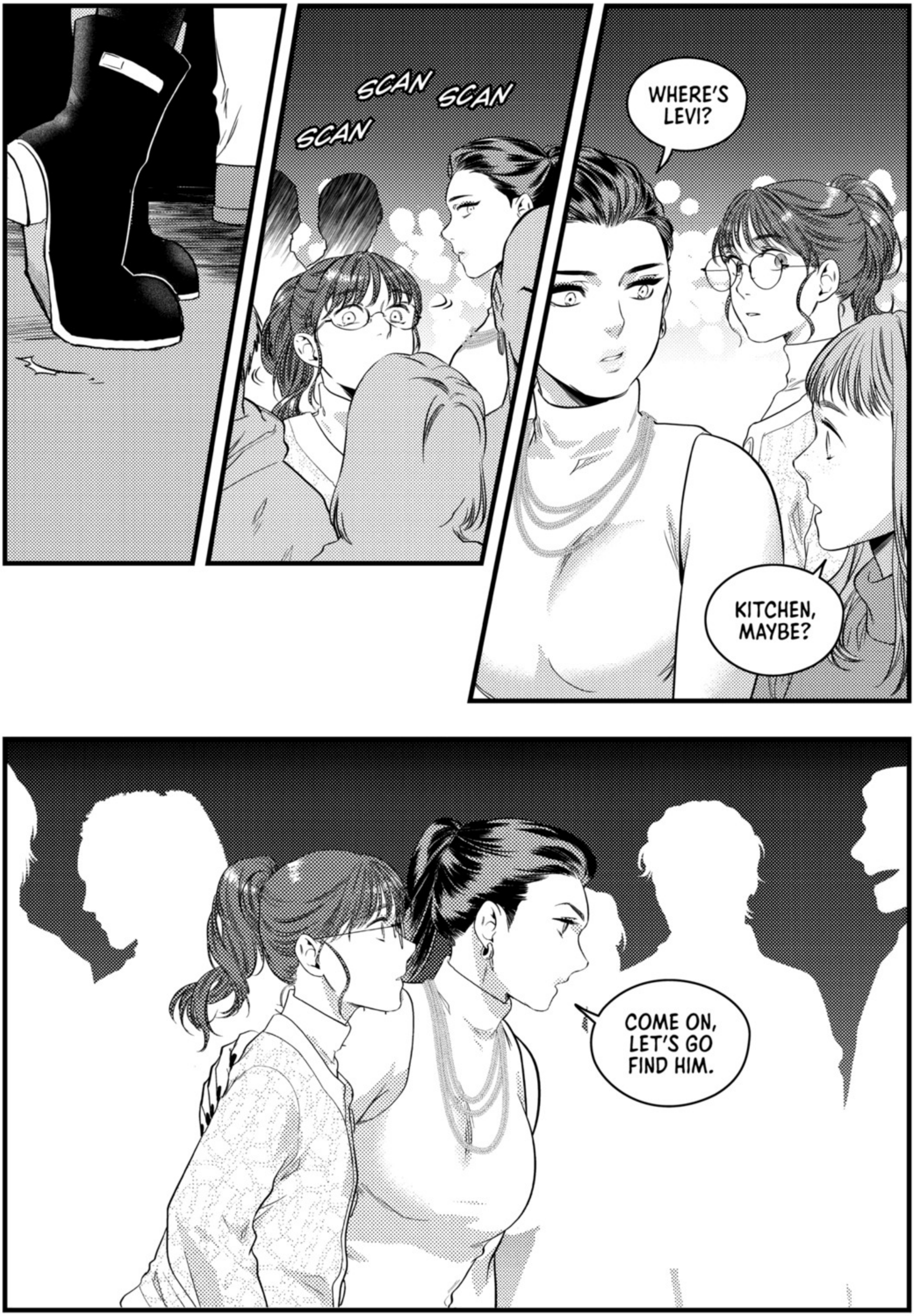
ALCOHOL. EYE CONTACT. BOY.

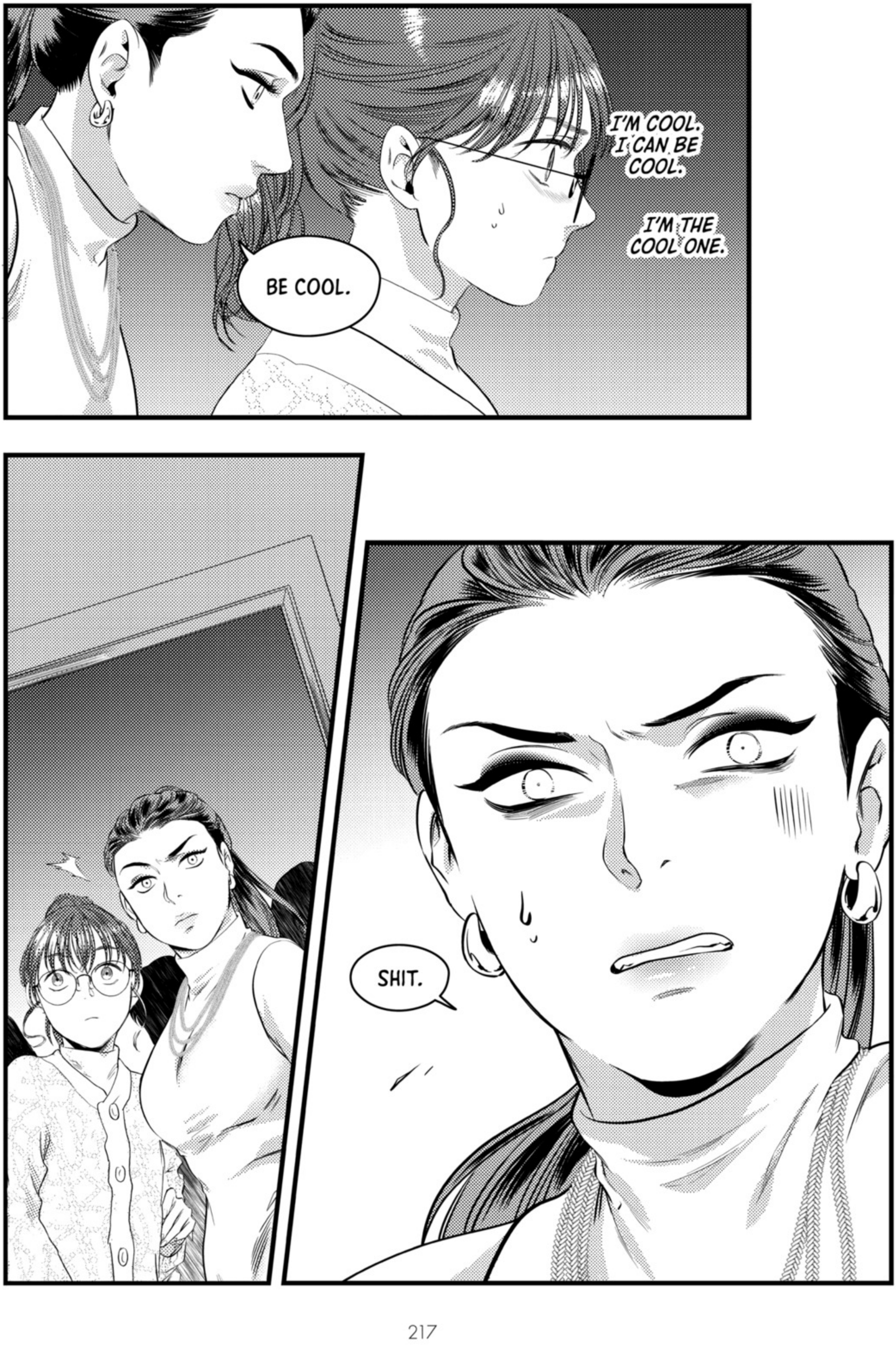
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS.

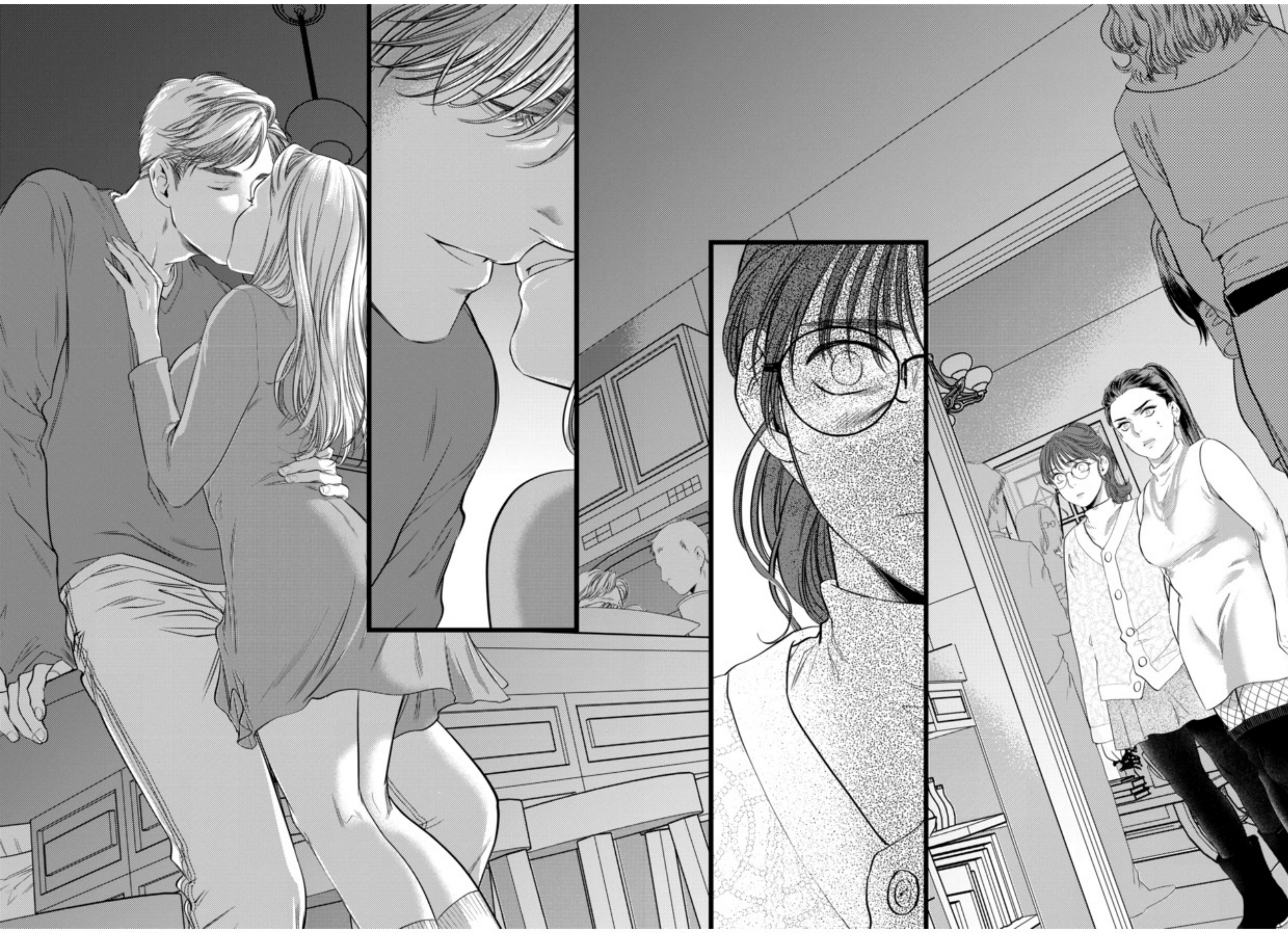

DON'T BE WEIRD.
I'M NOT GOING TO ABANDON YOU IN THERE...
EVEN IF I WANT TO.
PUSH


HEY, REAGAN.
REAGAN, YOU MADE IT!
YEAH, YEAH.
HEY.


I WONDER WHERE LEVI IS...?


SCAN
SCAN
SCAN
WHERE'S LEVI?
KITCHEN, MAYBE?
COME ON, LET'S GO FIND HIM.


BE COOL.
I'M COOL. I CAN BE COOL.
I'M THE COOL ONE.
SHIT.



Fangirl: The Manga

Rainbow Rowell, Sam Maggs, Gabi Nam

Status: Incomplete

Currently reading: 2/4

Language: English

Tags: Simon Snow, college, sisters, betrayal, corned beef hash

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Creator

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You can visit her website at www.rainbowrowell.com

SAM MAGGS

Adapter

SAM MAGGS is a bestselling author of books, comics, and video games. She's been a senior games writer, including work on *Marvel's Spider-Man*; the author of many YA and middle-grade books like *The Unstoppable Wasp, Con Quest!*, *Tell No Tales*, and *The Fangirl's Guide to the Galaxy*; and a comics writer for beloved titles like *Marvel Action: Captain Marvel*, *My Little Pony*, and *Transformers*.

You can visit her website at www.sammaggs.com

GABI NAM

Illustrator

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fangirl

THE MANGA

2

VIZ ORIGINALS EDITION

Based on the original novel *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell

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Adapted by SAM MAGGS and RAINBOW ROWELL
Illustrated by GABI NAM

Lettering: ERIKA TERRIQUEZ
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Editor: FAWN LAU

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
FANGIRL: THE MANGA is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains mature language and mature themes.

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